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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

AND

SERMONS,

OF SOME OF THE

FIRST MINISTERS OF THE ASSOCIATE CHURCH IN AMERICA.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ASSOCIATE CHURCH FOR THE FIRST HALF CENTURY OF HER EXISTENCE IN THIS COUNTRY.

BY JAMES P. MILLER,

Pastor of the Associate Presbyterian Congregation of Argyle, New-York.

ALBANY:

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MDCCCXXXIX.

PREFACE.

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In the present divided state of the religious community, it is important to all, that the rise, progress and present state of the different denominations, should be correctly understood. Without such a knowledge of particular denominations, we should be able to form but an inadequate idea of the state of religion in the country: Our knowledge of its general history would necessarily be defective—a loss not easily to be estimated.

But if the members of any society are unacquainted with the particular history of their own body, they are in a great measure disqualified for discharging their duties as members. Every parent in the whole nation of Israel was required to explain to his children, the meaning and design of every historical monument that was erected to perpetuate any of God's mercies wrought for that people. That parent in Israel, who could not do so, was incapable of performing his duty to his children, whose right it was to be instructed in the use and design of those things. Yea, he was incapable of discharging his duty to God, who required him thus to instruct his children.

But have we not good reason to apprehend, that there are many facts, the knowledge of which is necessary to a complete and correct history of the Associate Church in America, which are not now within the reach of all her members? Much less can those without her communion be supposed to be acquainted with her history. Indeed, any opinion which such may form of her distinguishing principles, either in doctrine or discipline, might be unjust towards her, and consequently injurious to themselves, and even to the community at large. As an illustration of this remark, the reader is referred to the attempt that was made a few years since, to give a sketch of the rise and progress of the Secession in Scotland, in the Biblical Repertory, one of the most respectable

and influential religious journals now published in this country. Though the many errors and mistakes which appeared in the articles referred to, were met, and ably corrected, in a series of papers published in the Religious Monitor, for the year 1836–7—yet, how many might, and doubtless did, read and give credit to the errors, who never will see the corrections? And in every erroneous statement of even a historical fact, concerning any portion of the church of Christ, which receives credit to any extent, the general cause of truth suffers.

To furnish the religious community, and the members of the Associate Church in particular, with the principal facts necessary to a correct knowledge of the rise and progress of this church in America, is the chief design both of the Historical Introduction and the Biographical Sketches. The facts stated, are all susceptible of being authenticated by the most unquestionable references. Care has been taken to state nothing that rested on doubtful evidence. When the proof is documentary, the authority, in general, is either given at the foot of the page, or referred to in the Appendix. When, also, documents appeared in a perishing condition, and might soon be irrecoverably lost, especially such as appeared to be useful for future reference, and when their nature did not properly admit of their being introduced into the text, they have been inserted in the Appendix. This has swelled this part of the book beyond the size first contemplated; it is hoped, however, that it will be neither the least interesting nor useful part. Most, if not all of the documents, will richly compensate for their room.

By some, indeed, these documents, as well as the facts published in this volume, may be deemed unseasonable,—as bringing to light the knowledge of transactions which had better been left in oblivion, which was fast spreading her mantle over them. Especially such as are connected with the formation of that Union, which gave rise to the denomination since known as the Associate Reformed Church. And had it been consistent with faithfulness and the interests of truth, the subscriber would gladly enough have suppressed any thing that he had reason to apprehend would be disrelished by any of his readers. But he had a debt to truth to discharge —a higher duty than to consult either his own feelings or the gratification of his readers. He has brought forward no fact which he did not deem important to the faithful history of the events which he has undertaken to record. He believes, also, that a knowledge of the origin of the existing divisions

in the visible church, is essential to a sound healing of those divisions.

As it is the first attempt, that has as yet been made public, of giving a history of the Associate Church in this country, the subscriber may not always have succeeded in arranging his facts in that order, which a more elaborate historical treatise would require; yet, he trusts, the reader will meet with no difficulty in comprehending the events in the order and connection in which they occurred.

In collecting materials for the Biographical Sketches, and particularly in selecting the Discourses, the subscriber acknowledges with gratitude, the kindness and favors which he has received from a number of his brethren and friends.

He regrets that he has not been able to present his readers, in this volume, with Discourses, and more particular Sketches of the lives, of Messrs. Gellatly, Arnot, Mathew Henderson, Ebenezer Henderson, and Cree; and also of the late Dr. Banks. In the hope of obtaining some of these for insertion in this volume, the publication has been delayed longer than it otherwise would have been. He also regrets, that in transcribing, an omission of a foot note occurred, referring to Mr. James Leiper, whose name appears as a member of Presbytery, on page 29, and other places. This excellent man and exemplary christian, was, at that time, ruling elder from Mr. Clarkson's congregation, in York county, Penn.; he afterwards removed to Beaver county, Pa., where he was also ruling elder in the congregation at King's Creek, a part of the charge of the late Dr. Anderson. This notice is due to the memory and the worth of this man. His religious deportment and conversation is associated with the earliest recollections of the subscriber. He came to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season; about the year 1813.

It may also here be noticed, that Mr. Daniel Houston, another of the elders, whose name occurs as taking part in the transactions of that period, died a few years since, at an advanced age, in the bounds of the congregation of Mount Hope, Washington county, Pa., having also sustained to the last, his high character as a religious man.

While in the way of filling up omissions, it may also be noticed, that the time of the appointment of Mr. Marshall, and also of Mr. Clarkson, on missions to this country, and their arrival, so far as ascertained, will be found in the Sketches of their lives.

It is believed that the Discourses inserted in this volume, will prove more creditable monuments to the memories of their authors, than the most costly marble. It is proper to state, that those of Messrs. Marshall and Beveridge, Dr. Anderson, Messrs. Somerville and Pringle, had been published under the inspection of the authors themselves. That of Mr. Armstrong had been written out by himself and presented to a friend, who kindly permitted the publisher to transcribe it for this volume. Dr. Shaw's was the last preached by him, and printed soon after his decease. All the others have been selected from the manuscripts of the authors, mostly by their friends or families.

The subscriber would only further avail himself of this occasion, to say to his friends and the public, and especially to the friends of other deceased ministers of the Associate Church, that if this volume should meet with a favorable reception, it is his intention, Providence permitting, to follow it shortly with another, continuing the History down to the present time; and to furnish, as far as practicable, a more particular sketch of those fathers, whose services and labors in the church are noticed in this volume, and also to complete the list of those who have since rested from their labors.

JAMES P. MILLER.

Argyle, N. Y., *April 2d*, 1839.

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INTRODUCTION.

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE INTRODUCTION AND PROGRESS OF THE ASSOCIATE CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

The first Petition for Supply of Preaching—The Mission of Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot—Their constituting themselves into a Presbytery—New Castle Presbytery's Warning—Results favourably to the cause of the Missionaries—Mr. Arnot returns—Death of Mr. Gellatly—Messrs. Proudfit, Henderson and Mason, sent over by the Associate Synod—The admission of, and union with some Burgher Ministers—Disapproved of by the Synod in Scotland—Arrival of Messrs. Smith and Rodger—Union with the Burgher brethren dissolved—Proposed union with the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia—Division of the Presbytery.

The history of the Associate Church in North America, may be said to commence in the year 1750, when the first application for a supply of preaching was made to the Associate Synod of Edinburgh. This was seventeen years after the rise of the Secession in Scotland, dating this event from November 17, 1733, when Messrs. Ebenezer Erskine, Alexander Moncrief, William Wilson, and James Fisher, gave in their Protestation, to the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, declaring their Secession from the prevailing party in the judicatories of that church.

The design of the Associate Brethren in Scotland in declaring their secession, was, that they might maintain in their original purity, the doctrine, order and discipline, set forth in the standards of the Church of Scotland, and which they found themselves no longer able to maintain in connection with the majority in the judicatories of that church; without submitting to terms which they deemed sinful. It was not, then, from any of the principles or doctrines of that church, nor from the order and discipline which was in accordance with

her received standards, that they seceded. Accordingly, in the same Protestation, in which the Associate Brethren declared their secession, they also appealed "to the first free, faithful. and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland," that should ever meet.

The importance of that secession was soon acknowledged throughout Scotland, and to a considerable extent among the Presbyterians of Ireland. Large accessions in these kingdoms were in a short time made to that cause. And so early did the knowledge of the cause and grounds of the Secession reach America, that in 1750, but three years after the division on account of the Burgess oath,* a respectable number from the Province of Pennsylvania, forwarded a petition to the Associate [Anti-Burgher] Synod of Scotland, for the dispensation of gospel ordinances.

These petitioners were chiefly emigrants from Scotland, or Ireland, who were intelligently and conscientiously attached to the principles of the Reformation, as maintained by the Church of Scotland in her purest times; and who, not finding among Presbyterians in America, that strict regard to those principles which they believed the word of God required, could not unite with them. They were, therefore, shut up to this mode of obtaining the dispensation of gospel ordinances; or submit to many things, which they believed not in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. The Synod in Scotland did not, however, find itself in circumstances to comply immediately with the prayer of the American petitioners. It was not until three years afterwards, that a mission was sent to America.

In the making of this appointment, the Synod either designedly followed the example of our Lord, the great Head and Patron of his church, in sending out his disciples two and two, when they were employed in the capacity of missionaries; or, in this instance, when it was so essentially necessa-

* It was this separation in the Associate Synod that gave rise to the names Burgher and Anti-Burgher. It took place on the 9th of April, in the year 1747. Each party retained the name "Associate Synod." But the public affixed to them the names of Burgher and Anti-Burgher, as they had been respectively for, or against the propriety of the oath. However convenient these names have been, as distinguishing epithets, but little necessity now exists for longer retaining them. The different divisions, first and last, which have sprung from the Associate Presbytery, that *seceded* from the Judicatories of the Church of Scotland, have so changed and intermingled ecclesiastical connections, that the original name seems now to be left almost exclusively in the possession of the Associate Church in North America, where we trust the original principles in doctrine, practice, and discipline, are still to be found, and where we hope they will long remain. The Burgher Synod never had an organization in the United States.

ry to the success of the work, it was brought about by Divine Providence, that two missionaries should be appointed. These were the Rev. Messrs. Alex. Gellatly and —— Arnot, minister of Midholm. The former was sent with a view to a permanent settlement in this country. Although enterprises of this kind have become familiar in the present age, yet at the middle of the last century, it evinced no ordinary degree of zeal in the cause of spreading the gospel of salvation, to volunteer as a missionary to America; then deemed in Europe a wilderness and land of savages.

Mr. Gellatly was not connected with a particular congregation. He cheerfully yielded to the authority of the Synod appointing him on the mission. Some difficulty was experienced in finding another as suitable to engage. Mr. Arnot, who had been but recently settled in the pastoral charge of the congregation of Midholm, in the south of Scotland, observing some who were named for the mission appearing backward in undertaking it, declared his willingness to go for two years, on the condition that the Synod would supply his congregation during his absence. This condition was readily accepted, and he was accordingly appointed with Mr. Gellatly. They were authorised to organize congregations, ordain elders, and if they judged it proper, to constitute themselves, with ruling elders, into a Presbytery.

The two missionaries set out with the prayers and blessings of the church, and arrived in safety in the summer of 1754.* They proceeded without delay to the people, who were seeking their aid. The first applications were confined chiefly, if not wholly, to a few of the eastern counties of what was then the Province, now the State of Pennsylvania, and the largest body of the people who were together, were in parts of Lancaster and Chester Counties. In these places the two brethren found a people anxiously expecting their arrival, and ready to learn the law at their mouth. They soon found, also, that an extensive field and a pressing call for their labors were before them. They, according to the authority committed to them, constituted themselves into a Presbytery, under the name and style of the "Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, subordinate to the Associate Synod of Edinburgh."

The brethren were not, however, left long in their new field

* In the copy which I have of the inscription on the grave-stone of Mr. Gellatly, his arrival is dated 1753, but all the other documents I have consulted, give 1754 as the date.

of labor, without an occasion to lift up their special testimony in defence of those truths and doctrines, for which their fathers and brethren had to contend in Great Britain, and which contendings indeed gave rise to the Secession at first. But their new troubles sprung up from a quarter, whence none had been anticipated.

A Synod, called the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, [now the General Assembly Church of the United States,] organized on Presbyterian principles, and professing a general adherence to the standards of the Westminster Assembly, had already, for some time, existed in the American Colonies.*

The Presbytery of New Castle, belonging to this Synod, embraced within its limits some of the same territory occupied by the labors of the Associate Brethren. This Presbytery appears to have regarded Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot as intruders, and to have treated them accordingly. They had been but a short time engaged in their new field of labors, when this Presbytery issued a Warning against them, in which the Associate Brethren are not only denounced as schismatics and separatists, but the whole Associate Church is charged with holding and teaching error concerning the gospel offer—the nature of faith—the obligation of the religious covenant engagements of our Reforming forefathers on their posterity. And, not content with these weighty charges, the New Castle Presbytery declared the Secession in Scotland to be schismatical, and represented the Associate Brethren as *seceders* from the Presbyterian Church in America as well as in Scotland.

These brethren considered themselves now called upon, in Divine Providence, not only to vindicate their right, in obedience to the call and appointment, which they had received to come to this country to preach the gospel; but also to vindicate the necessity of the Secession in Scotland, and to give a full and distinct statement of the doctrines and views of the Associate Church on the points on which they deemed her doctrines had been unfairly exhibited by the New Castle Presbytery. They alleged that they could not be chargeable

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* The adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith, required of the ministers belonging to the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, contained an exception, of what not only the Synod itself, but what any Presbytery subordinate to it, might judge "not essential in doctrine, worship and government." But these non-essential particulars are not specified. *Query?* Can not the troubles which have, for some years past, and are still (1838) rending that numerous body, be legitimately traced to this exception, as their source?

with seceding from the Presbyterian Church in America, as they never had been in union with her. For, although the Presbyterian Church, which the Associate Brethren found in existence in this country when they came, possessed in *general* an adherence to the acknowledged standards of the Church of Scotland, yet no ecclesiastical connection existed between the churches in the two countries. And those standards had never been adopted as the bond of union, or terms of fellowship by the church in this country. The Associate Brethren found themselves under the necessity of meeting the false and injurious statements in this Warning, in a manner as public as they had been made.

They accordingly published their remarks on the statements in the Warning of the New Castle Pesbytery. These remarks, which were contained in a pamphlet of about two hundred and fifty pages, were from the pen of Mr. Gellatly, and give evidence, not only of very clear and sound views on these important points of scriptural doctrine, but also of a strong and vigorous mind, ardently and conscientiously attached to truth.

The controversy was carried on for some time by individuals, with a considerable degree of spirit, and, as is too frequently the case in such controversies, not without the use in some instances, of more sharpness in language than would be approved by either party, when the heat of controversy was over.

But the Associate Brethren then complained, and the Associate Church ever since has complained, that the injurious and groundless statements were never retracted by the Presbytery of New Castle. Nor to this day have they been renounced by the Synod, or any judicatory of that church, to which the Presbytery was responsible.* For it is a principle held by the Associate Church, that religious societies have a continued existence in the succession of their members.

But the result of this controversy was, on the whole, favorable to the spread of the principles of the Associate Presbytery, as it was a means of making them more extensively known. The applications for preaching and the dispensation of the sacraments, greatly increased. The brethren of the Associate Presbytery having surmounted the opposition made to them at the opening of their labors, and the favorable manner in which their principles and their labors were received by serious people in many parts of the country, seem-

* Narrative, page 42.

ing to indicate the mind of Providence that the cause which they professed would be maintained, began to think of measures which would tend to the permanent establishment of the Presbytery in this country.

The principal settlement of the adherents to the Associate Presbytery, was in Octorara and Oxford, in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. From these places Mr. Gellatly received a call to become their stated pastor. This call he accepted, and accordingly made these places the principal scene of his labors, and his residence so far as the general interests of the now thriving society, and the frequent calls to labor in new places, would permit.

The term of Mr. Arnot's appointment being limited, it was necessary he should return to his congregation and family. The demand for more laborers was, in the meantime more pressing and increasing. The Associate Synod of Edinburgh being informed of the circumstances of the Presbytery, resolved to send them more ministerial aid. Accordingly the Rev. James Proudfit was sent over, before the expiration of Mr. Arnot's appointment. Thus the Presbytery was continued; and as soon as practicable after Mr. Arnot's return, Messrs. Matthew Henderson and John Mason were sent over; and Mr. Smart,* also, near the same time, who remained but a short period, and returned to Scotland.

Mr. Arnot having returned home, greatly aided the cause of the Presbytery, by his influence with the Synod, and among the people. He continued to take a peculiarly deep interest in the prosperity of the Associate Church in America during the whole period of his long and useful life.

Several ministers and probationers arriving from Scotland, the affairs of the Presbytery continued in a prosperous condition; but without any occurrence worthy of special notice, until after the death of Mr. Gellatly; which event took place March 12, 1761; a little less than five years after his arrival.† The loss of this eminent servant of Jesus Christ, who had been so completely identified with the interests of the Associate Church in America, produced a deep sensation, not only throughout the infant society in this country, but also among its friends in Scotland. He was removed in the forty-second year of his age, and from a sphere of usefulness from which the highest expectations might reasonably have been entertained.

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* Two grandsons of Mr. Smart's are now in the ministry, in the Associate Church, in this country.

† See Appendix A.

But the church's loss was his gain. His Great Master saw fit to remove him from a field of labor which his bodily constitution, already enfeebled by too much exposure, was but little qualified to endure; and from a scene of contention and trouble, which shortly came upon the church; to that place of repose, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

The applications to the Presbytery for supply of preaching, were no longer confined to the eastern section of Pennsylvania. Petitions were numerous from various parts of Pennsylvania, New-York, Virginia, and the Carolinas.* Several ministers and probationers having been sent in, and some having returned, the intercourse between the Presbytery and Synod was frequent and harmonious; and nothing occurred to interrupt this harmony until the year 1765. In the preceding year the Rev. Dr. Thomas Clark, belonging to that division of the Secession, called the Burgher Synod, emigrated, with the greater part of his congregation, from Ireland to this country. The people who emigrated with him, divided when they arrived in New-York; a part went to Long Cane, in South Carolina; the remainder, with their minister, went up the Hudson, and after remaining a short time near Stillwater, removed to a place then called New Perth, now Salem, Washington county, New-York. Mr. Clark, whose views of the grounds and principles of the Secession seem to have been very distinct and clear, made application to the Associate Presbytery for admission. After some conference with him, and explanation, certain articles were drawn up, explanatory of the terms upon which he was received, and upon which he consented to join the Presbytery.† The basis of these articles was a recognition of the Secesssion Testimony. His admission took place in 1765. This transaction appears to have been entered into, in good faith, and with the best intentions, both upon the part of the Presbytery and of Mr. Clark; and were it not for what shortly followed, it might not have been worthy of particular notice. For Mr. Clark seemed to give up, wholly and sincerely, all connexion with, and partiality for, the peculiarities of the Burgher Synod. The drawing up and signing of articles of admission distinct from the public, and already ratified standards of the church, however consistent with them, seems to have been the only error in this matter, into which the Presbytery fell.

But to this may, doubtless, be traced the step taken by the

* Life of Marshall, page 7.

† *Ibid.* page 10.

Presbytery two years afterwards, in the case of Messrs. Telfair and Kinloch; which led to the interruption for some time, of the intercourse between the Presbytery and Synod.

Mr. Telfair and Mr. Kinloch, both from the Burgher Synod in Scotland, the former ordained, the latter a probationer, made application also to be admitted into the fellowship of the Presbytery, in the year 1769. They agreed to and subscribed the same articles which Mr. Clark had subscribed, but not without some alterations and additions, which were, however, deemed small and unimportant at the time by the Presbytery. In the additions it was expressly stipulated that "neither party shall justify the Burgess oath, nor the censures inflicted on those who held the lawfulness of it; and that they look upon themselves as standing on the same footing as before the rupture." It was further agreed that the individuals should not be required to break off any connection which had subsisted between them and the body to which they had respectively belonged in Scotland.*

It may be justly viewed with some surprise, that men as discerning and honest as Mr. Marshall, and some others who were then in the Presbytery, did not see the absurdity of such a course, on the part of the Presbytery. For, notwithstanding that the Secession Testimony was recognized, as containing the principles upon which they united, yet the individuals admitted understood it as a union between themselves as Burghers, and the Associate Presbytery, as Anti-Burghers: and the former considered themselves still subordinate to the Burgher Synod in Scotland.†

Had it been practicable to have followed up this plan, the Presbytery would have been a mixture of various denominations, subject to the jurisdiction of two distinct religious bodies: the difference between the two Synods in Scotland, being still on the increase.

This measure was, however, much disapproved of by the Synod of Edinburgh, and not well received by the people. The Synod complained that the Presbytery received some, on terms different from that of simply assenting to the publicly received standards, which was the term upon which all should be received; and they for some time refused to grant them any further supply.‡

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* Vindication of the Associate Presbytery, page 8.

† In the trial concerning the Spruce-street Meeting-House, more than twenty years afterwards, Mr. Telfair declared on oath, before Judge Rush, that this was his understanding of it.

‡ Marshall's Life, page 10.

It is, however, due to the Presbytery to state, that the members had not the most distant idea of abandoning any of their publicly espoused principles, or of dropping any part of that Testimony, which they were maintaining in common with their brethren of the Associate Synod in Britain. The main thing they seem to have had in view, was, the obtaining of more help for their numerous and destitute vacancies. But in this they were disappointed, for both these men soon went back to Scotland, and joined their former connection; and the Presbytery became more helpless than ever; as the Synod had now ceased to send them assistance.

The Presbytery now began to feel the unpleasantness of its condition, and most of the members to see the impropriety of the course they had pursued. They, therefore, instructed the people to apply themselves directly to the Synod for supply, which they accordingly did, and with the desired effect. In answer to this new application from the people, the Synod in 1770, appointed on a new mission to America, Messrs. John Smith and John Rodger, with particular instructions, to require the Presbytery to annul the union with the Burgher Brethren, and obliterate the minute respecting it.*

Upon the arrival of these brethren in 1771, a meeting of the Presbytery was called at Pequa, Pa., June 5th of that year; when Messrs. Rodger and Smith laid before the Presbytery the instructions which they had received from the Synod. To the first requisition of the Synod, viz: "To dissolve the union with the Burgher Brethren," the Presbytery unanimously agreed, stating in the minutes, that Presbytery "now found, that in making the union with the Burgher Brethren they had taken some steps inconsistent with the subordination to the Synod to which they have been, and are subordinate; and they are determined that for the future they shall have no ministerial communion with them, until they lay the case before Synod, and receive instructions from them."†

From this language, and the unanimity with which it was adopted, it is manifest that the Presbytery was now sensible of the error that had been committed in receiving into fellowship persons, who were maintaining, to any extent, an ecclesiastical connection different from, and in some things opposite to that, to which they had now acceded. A society thus constituted could not exhibit that mark of the true church, which God has promised his people shall enjoy, when "He will give them *one* heart, and *one* way."‡ Such a society of

* See Appendix B. † See Appendix C. ‡ Jer. xxxii. 39.

professing christians could not "be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment."* With the other particular in the instructions of the Synod, the Presbytery declined complying. As the minute recording the admission of the Burgher Brethren, was a correct record of the transaction, it was thought proper it should stand as such; and the minute recording the acknowledgment of the Presbytery's error in that act, would be sufficient to counteract the evil influence, the former minute might have as a precedent. The Synod appears to have concurred in this judgment of the Presbytery from their acquiescing in it.

Messrs. Rodger and Smith considered the demand of the Synod materially complied with, on the part of the Presbytery; they accordingly took their seats as members of the Presbytery. In this whole transaction, also, the brethren of the Presbytery appeared hearty; for the Moderator, the Rev. James Proudfit, stated to Mr. Telfair, who returned from Scotland this year and claimed his seat in Presbytery, that "the union between him and the Presbytery was dissolved, and *that it was very sinful in them ever to have made it.*"†

Thus terminated the connection between the Associate Presbytery and the Burgher Brethren, which indeed never deserved the name of a union; though it was not made on as loose terms as that which was afterwards formed with the Reformed Presbytery; for the Secession Testimony was adopted as the bond of it; yet, being gone into irregularly, it no doubt had its influence in paving the way for that union which trampled the Testimony under foot, and rent the Associate Body in pieces.

About the same time that these difficulties existed between the Presbytery and Synod, a correspondence was opened between the Synod of New-York and Pennsylvania, (now the General Assembly,) and the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, respecting a union between these two bodies. Committees of correspondence were appointed, and some terms, or basis of union, were proposed; and during the years 1770, and 1771, several papers on the subject passed between the two bodies, through their committees. But their views were found to be so widely different on several important points, that the plan was finally abandoned as hopeless. It was soon manifest, that the two bodies in their then present views, were not sufficiently agreed to walk together.‡

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* 1 Cor. i. 10. † Vindication of the Presbytery.
‡ Marshall's Life, page 15.

Harmony being again restored between the Presbytery and the Synod, the former having received additional strength by the accession of the Synod's missionaries, its prosperity and that of the congregations under its charge, seemed to progress with accelerated steps. So much had the Presbytery increased, that in May, 1776, it was agreed to divide it into two; several of the members being settled in the Province of New-York, and the means of intercourse between distant places being then attended with much loss of time, and expenditure of money, were also considerations increasing the necessity of a division.

The whole Presbytery at that time consisted of thirteen ministers, scattered through Pennsylvania and New-York. Those ministers residing in Pennsylvania remained in the Presbytery of Pennsylvania. Those in New-York were set off for a new Presbytery, which was called the Presbytery of New-York. The former consisted of the following members, viz: Messrs. James Proudfit, Matthew Henderson, William Marshall, John Rodger, John Smith, James Clarkson, William Logan, and John Murray, together with a Mr. James Martin, and Mr. Andrew Patten.

The Presbytery of New-York was composed of the following members, viz: Messrs. John Mason, Thomas Clark and Robert Annan.*

It was agreed that the two Presbyteries should keep up a correspondence with each other. This appears to have been the only terms upon which they proposed to maintain their unity. However honest all the members were in this matter, it was evidently a great and unhappy departure from those Presbyterian principles, which the whole body professed, and by which alone the visible unity and communion of the church can be preserved. By a division of the Presbytery upon this principle, each Presbytery became a distinct and independent judicature. The one having no right to review the deeds of the other, they might pursue different and even opposite courses from each other, as the event soon demonstrated. Had they divided into three Presbyteries, as they might conveniently have done, and then met together in Synod, (and this Synod again subordinate to a general Synod) where the proceedings of each Presbytery could have been reviewed, and to which appeals could have been made, the true Presbyterian principle would have been maintained: as both Presbyteries were, however, to remain subordinate to the As-

* Marshall's Life, page 16.

sociate Synod in Scotland, the members doubtless believed that no other connection than the friendly correspondence they proposed, was necessary for maintaining the scriptural unity of the visible church; but the impracticability of carrying up appeals to a judicature, situated at so great a distance and of having the minutes of each Presbytery regularly reviewed, seems not to have been duly considered.

In reviewing this part of the history of the Associate Church, we think we can trace many of the unhappy divisions that have since taken place, to this step of the Presbytery; and the reflection presses itself upon us, that, when the people of God step aside from the prescribed path of duty, the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls may sometimes permit them to wander far and long, before he brings them back.

When these two Presbyteries divided, more than half a century since, they were united in sentiment, in doctrine, in discipline and in affection; but the division was the beginning of a separation, which soon disrupted the bonds of brotherhood; and a train of evils ensued, which nearly annihilated in America, that cause, which all had been apparently most cordially "striving together" to maintain.

CHAPTER II.

Union proposed between the Reformed Presbytery and the Associate Presbytery--Conference on the subject at Donegal, in 1777—And at Pequa, in 1778--Mr. Murray's Overture--Presbytery and Conference at Middle Octorara--Diversity of opinion on the subjects discussed—Propositions drawn up for future consideration—Meeting of Presbytery at Big Spring, at which other propositions were drawn up—And to which a representation and petition was sent, expressing dissatisfaction with the Union—Conference at Pequa, June, 1779--Mr. Linn's sentiments—Attempt to compromise the difference of sentiment—Case of Mr. Rodger—Andrew Patten—James Martin—Ultimatum drawn up by Messrs. Smith and Marshall—Answer to, from the Reformed Presbytery—Union apparently abandoned.

From the division of the Presbytery, May 20th, 1776, until the coalescence, 1782, it was an eventful and trying period to the Associate Church in America. It was during this period that the people of the Colonies were engaged in the contest for the political independence which this nation now enjoys.

The intercourse between this and the mother country being prohibited during that contest, the communication between the Presbytery and Synod, was also necessarily interrupted. Another effect produced by that contest was, the alienation of the affections of the Colonists from the mother country, and by a natural and almost uniform transition, they were also transferred from the institutions in that country. This was succeeded by a more close union among the Colonists themselves; religious distinctions were in a great measure lost, in the political union of all classes, especially of Presbyterians, in the common defence of liberty and independence.

These effects soon appeared in a plan of union proposed to be formed between the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and the Reformed Presbytery, commonly called Covenanters. This Presbytery had been constituted in this country in the year 1774, two years before the Declaration of Independence; they professed the same principles with the Reformed Presbyterians in Scotland and Ireland, with which they were ecclesiastically connected. It consisted of three members, viz: Messrs. John Cuthbertson, William Linn, and Alexander Dobbin, who preached mostly in Pennsylvania.* The members of this Presbytery, notwithstanding all that was maintained in their Testimony respecting the necessity of scriptural qualifications to the lawful existence of civil magistracy, fell in with the American Revolution, and submitted to the government as now organized.

The Reformed Presbytery were reputed strict in adhering to their profession, and generally exemplary in their practice; and as they now acknowledged the newly created government of the United States, the scheme of union with them seemed to have much to recommend it, and it was accordingly espoused by some, who had been formerly zealous in opposing the distinguishing peculiarities of this Presbytery. These now alledged that nothing but prejudice, bigotry or ignorance would oppose the union.† They seemed to lose sight of all the other distinguishing tenets of this Presbytery, upon its abandoning the one respecting civil magistracy.

Among the number of those who favored the union, was the Rev. Robert Annan, who was settled at Walkill, in the State of New-York. In the summer of 1777, while the British had possession of Philadelphia, and their army was marching through Pennsylvania, Mr. Annan came to Pennsylvania, and

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* Marshall's Life, page 17; and Reformation Principles Exhibited, page 96.
† Vindication, page 10.

succeeded in getting up a Conference between some of the members of the two bodies. This meeting was held at Donegal, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, in August of this year; three years after the constitution of the Reformed Presbytery in this country. Few members attended, and little more was effected at this meeting than an agreement to meet again in March, the ensuing year, at Pequa, also, in Pennsylvania. This meeting was attended by Messrs. Proudfit, Clarkson, Smith and Murray, with elders from their respective congregations, of the Associate Presbytery; and by Messrs. Cuthbertson, Linn and Dobbin, with elders, of the Reformed Presbytery.

At this Conference a greater difference of sentiment appeared than had been apprehended. The members of the Associate Presbytery themselves seemed not to be of one mind, respecting the obligation and nature of public covenant engagements. The members of the Reformed Presbytery, also, began to defend their peculiar views concerning the origin of civil magistracy, and the qualifications of civil rulers; which views, it had been thought, they had wholly abandoned, in their submission to the newly organized government of the United States; for in this government no particular religious belief was required as a qualification for office. But notwithstanding the diversity of sentiment that appeared at this meeting, there were still some resolved not to abandon the scheme of a union. After much disscussion, certain propositions capable of being construed to meet the views of the different parties in the conference were drawn up, and it was agreed to meet again on the 29th of October the same year, at Middle Octorara.

As yet the consideration of the union had not been introduced into the Presbytery, all that had been done was extrajudicial. But at a meeting of the Associate Presbytery, at Tohikan, Bucks county, October 21st of the same year, the following Overture on this subject was introduced by the Rev. Mr. Murray.

"That this Presbytery expressly nominate and appoint some week hereafter, as soon as convenience will permit, to take into serious consideration, the subject of the proposed union with the Covenanters: and to confer with them in an amicable manner on the same subject, in order to try whether or not a coalescence can be brought about, in a consistency with the glory of God, and the cause of truth, and the comfort of the Church. And for proceeding in this matter with greater regularity, it is further proposed, that this Presbytery

set apart one of the days of the week, that may be nominated for the Conference, for the purpose of conferring together by themselves, on the subject of the proposed union, and for solemn prayer unto God for his special direction in this matter." The design of this Overture was to prepare for the meeting of the Conference on the ensuing week. The Presbytery, however, did not agree to the proposition contained in the Overture, but appointed their next meeting on the 27th of the same month, two days before the meeting of the Conference, at the same place Middle Octorara. This meeting of Presbytery was more fully attended than the preceding. There were present, the Rev. Mr. Murray, Moderator, and Messrs. Proudfit, Henderson, Marshall, Rodger, Smith, Clarkson and Logan, ministers, and Messrs William Moore,* James Brown, Robert Thomson, William Finley and Alexander Moor, ruling elders. There were present, also, the Rev. Messrs Mason and Clark of the Associate Presbytery of New-York, who had come with a view of attending the Conference, and who were also allowed a seat in Presbytery. The principal subject of discussion at this meeting, was, respecting the propriety or impropriety of holding a Conference with the members of the Reformed Presbytery at present; a motion at length prevailed to meet with them next day at 10 o'clock, A. M. Messrs. Rodger and Smith were appointed a committee to prepare the subjects to be proposed for consideration at the Conference.

On the next morning, the committee gave in their report, specifying subjects for Conference with the Reformed Presbytery, viz:—"Redemption—the origin and channel of civil government—the moral law—the kingdom of Christ—the qualifications of civil rulers—the obligation of our solemn covenants—the lawfulness of civil establishments in religion—their (the Reformed Presbytery's) Testimony." This report was agreed to, and Presbytery adjourned to meet in the afternoon, immediately after the Conference.†

The members of the Reformed Presbytery being present, the Conference took place After some time had been spent in an interchange of sentiments on the above subjects, it became evident that the two bodies were not of one mind on most of the points proposed for discussion. A diversity of

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* I visited the widow of this man in 1823, in company with the Rev. James Pringle. She was then 106 years old, had still a sound mind and retentive memory. She had a distinct recollection of the principal facts connected with the union.

† Minutes of Presbytery as published in Marshall's Vindication, &c. pages 10 and 11.

opinion, however, prevailed among the members of the Associate Presbytery, respecting the importance of the points on which a difference of sentiment appeared in the Conference. Some considered all prospect of a union hopeless, and were therefore inclined to drop all further attempts to accomplish it; while others more sanguine, or attaching less importance to a difference in those matters, resolved to prosecute still further the proposed union.

During the sitting of the Conference, the following propositions were hastily drawn up, and, without discussion, proposed for future consideration, as an Overture of a basis of UNION.

"1. That Jesus Christ died only for the elect.

"2 That there is an appropriation in the nature of Faith.

"3. That the gospel is indiscriminately addressed to mankind sinners.

"4. That the righteousness of Christ is the alone proper condition of the covenant of grace.

"5. That civil power originates from God as Creator, and not from Christ as Mediator.

"6. That magistracy in respect of its sanctified use, is dispensed by Christ, to whom the kingdom of Providence is committed, in subserviency to the kingdom of grace.

"7. That the law of nature, and the moral law revealed in the Bible, are substantially the same, though the latter expresses the will of God far more fully than the former, and that therefore among christians, magistracy, and the duties thereunto belonging, are subject to the general directions of the Holy Scriptures.

"8. That some qualifications are in scripture required, as essentially needful, to the being of magistracy, such as wisdom, justice and veracity, in due proportions; but the profession of the true religion is not absolutely needful to the being of magistracy, except where it is made by the people a condition of government, but it is at all times of great necessity to the well-being of civil government."

The Conference adjourned, after having agreed to hold another meeting at Pequa, June 9th, 1779.

The proposed union now began to be much discussed among the people, many of whom feared that it would only be productive of evil. Accordingly a representation and petition from the Session, and other members of the congregation of Guinstown, was presented at the next meeting of the Associate Presbytery, setting forth their dissatisfaction with the scheme of union with the Reformed Presbytery, and praying

that their scruples might be removed. This meeting of Presbytery was held at Big Spring, May 26th, 1779, and with the exception of Messrs. Henderson and Marshall, all the members were present. The minutes of the Conference, held at Middle Octorara, were read and the minds of the members taken upon the above proposed BASIS of union. Propositions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, (which see above,) were unanimously approved of; but the following were substituted by Presbytery in the place of 6, 7 and 8.

"6. That the kingdom of Providence is committed to our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Father, in subserviency to his spiritual kingdom in the church. Magistracy, as well as other common benefits, he limits, directs, and overrules for obtaining that great end.

"7. That though the law of nature be the grand foundation of magistracy, and the only proper standard by which every civil ruler can be directed in the administration of his government; yet for obtaining the full advantage of the great ends of his office, the peace and happiness of civil society, he is indispensably bound to receive the aid that supernatural revelation (if in the possession of it) offers for the obtaining of that important end.

"8. That some degree of personal qualifications, and that of a moral kind, such as wisdom, justice, knowledge, &c. are absolutely necessary, to render any individual capable of being invested with any civil office, and are absolutely necessary to the right administration of that office, is a truth clearly inculcated by the law of nature; and although the profession of the true religion, the practice of holiness, with other evidences of a person's interest in Jesus (all of which is the prerogative of scripture to reveal) are of great use to civil society, and the administration of civil power in that society, yet they are not revealed in the law of nature; therefore, are not the origin of civil power, nor the rule of its administration, but only for its advantage."*

These propositions embrace the points on which a difference of sentiment was apprehended, and as they present the principal subjects of discussion at the subsequent meetings of the two bodies, I have set them down at length. The Associate Presbytery seemed at this time to be guarding against a mere union in words, and not of sentiment. Hence in these latter propositions their object seems to have been to obtain a more

* Vindication of the Associate Presbytery, pages 12, 13.

explicit expression of sentiment on the points of difference, than the former seemed calculated to elicit.

The next Conference met at Pequa, on the 9th of June, of the same year. There were present of the Associate Presbytery, Messrs. Proudfit, Henderson, Marshall, Clarkson, Smith and Logan, ministers; William Moor, Samuel Harper,* and Robert Aitken, ruling elders; also, the Rev. R. Annan and William Gillespie, elder, of the Associate Presbytery of New-York. The ministers of the Reformed Presbytery were all present, with elders, Messrs. William Brown, James M'Knight and David Dunwiddie.

Mr. Clarkson was chosen President of the Conference. The propositions drawn up at Middle Octorara, with the alterations made at Big Spring, were read. The members of the Reformed Presbytery agreed to the former but refused the latter. The members of the Associate Presbytery defended their alterations, not only as being agreeable to truth, but as more explicit, and less ambiguous, than the original propositions. This discussion brought under review the leading points in the views of the Reformed Presbytery, respecting the origin of civil magistracy, and the extent of the Mediator's kingdom. After a long and warm debate, Mr. Linn concluded his speech with the following words:—"We might agree to what propositions we pleased, but he would agree to none but with this interpretation—that all that power and ability civil rulers have, are from Christ the Prophet of the Covenant, and all that food and raiment mankind enjoy, are from Christ the Priest of the Covenant."

It seemed evident from this avowal of sentiment, that, though they should agree to "*speak* the same things," they would not agree to "*think* the same things;" nor would they be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment."

It was the opinion of some of both parties, that all further attempts to accomplish a union, should now be abandoned. Rightly judging, that where so much diversity of sentiment actually existed, any union that could be formed would be merely nominal. Besides a body thus composed would want

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* Mr. Harper, whose name will frequently occur as a member of Presbytery, was a ruling elder from the congregation of Guinstown, York county, Pa., from which place he afterwards removed to King's Creek congregation, under the care of the Rev. Dr. Anderson; he was for a number of years an active and influential ruling elder, and died about 1813. He was a man of superior intelligence, and a decided advocate for truth in doctrine and practice. His whole life and deportment highly adorned his christian profession.

that *unity*, which is laid down in the word of God as one of the most prominent marks of the Church of Christ, which he denominates his *body*, his *spouse*. Others, however, were intent on accomplishing a coalescence on some terms; and accordingly a motion was made to appoint a committee, to consist of equal numbers from each body, to draw up other propositions in which the difference of sentiment might be compromised. Messrs. Annan and Smith, Cuthbertson and Dobbin, were accordingly chosen by a majority of the Conference. Messrs. Henderson and Marshall declined voting on the motion. The individuals chosen as a committee, particularly Mr. Annan, had been very forward in pressing on the affair of the union; they soon reported the following propositions, viz:

"1. That the administration of the kingdom of Providence, is in the hands of Jesus Christ, the Mediator; and magistracy the divine ordinance, appointed by the moral Governor of the world, as the prop of civil order among men, as well as other things, is rendered subservient by the Mediator to the welfare of his spiritual kingdom, the church; and besides the church has the sanctified use of that and every other common benefit, through the grace of our Lord Jesus.

"2. That the law of nature, and the moral law revealed in the scriptures are substantially the same, although the latter expresses the will of God more evidently and clearly than the former; and, therefore, magistrates among christians ought to be regulated by the general directions of the Word; as to the execution of their office in faithfulness and righteousness.

"3. That the qualifications of justice, veracity, &c. required in the law of nature for the being of a magistrate, are also more explicitly and clearly revealed in scripture; but a religious test can never be necessary to the being of magistrates, except when the people make it a condition of government, then it may be, and is, among that people necessary, by their own voluntary deed."*

As these propositions, though well expressed so far as they go, did not touch on some of the points on which the two bodies had been professedly opposed to each other, they were considered unsatisfactory by some of the members of the Associate Presbytery, as being too indefinite, and ambiguous as a basis of union.

The difficulty of their assenting to these propositions, was not diminished by the facility with which their Reformed Brethren acceded to them; for they were aware that their

* Vindication of the Associate Presbytery, pages 14 and 15.

brethren had the declaration of Mr. Linn in reserve, which they might plead, if necessary, as the rule of their interpretation. Accordingly a dissent was entered by Messrs. Henderson, Marshall and Clarkson, ministers; and William Moor, Samuel Harper, and Robert Arthur, elders; for the following reasons:—

"1. To appoint a committee by this conferring council of two ecclesiastical bodies, distinct in their communion, and this committee consisting of members of the Reformed Presbytery, was an outrage on Presbyterial order.

"2. Because they apprehended that no deed of the civil constitution can make religious qualifications necessary to the being of magistracy among that people where this is done. The office of magistracy among heathens and christians being substantially the same, as the whole of the magistrates office lies within the compass of natural principles, and the want of scriptural qualifications can never invalidate his authority. Notwithstanding it is the duty of professed christians to attend to the directions given on this head in the Holy Scriptures. Our brethren in Great Britain and Ireland, on this principle acknowledge the government in those lands.

"3. Because a union in words, without a cordial agreement in the truth, can never answer any salutary purpose. *Two cannot walk together except they be agreed.*"*

The Associate Presbytery met at 7 o'clock in the evening, and being constituted a motion was made to approve judicially of the propositions drawn up in the afternoon by the committee of the Conference, with a view to accommodate a difference about those agreed to at Big Spring. After some discussion, but without taking the vote on the motion, Presbytery adjourned until 8 o'clock next morning; when the consideration of the propositions was resumed, and agreed to by a majority of Presbytery. The Conference again opened; but some members of the Associate Presbytery were so much dissatisfied with the proceedings that they declined taking any part in them, Mr. Robert Aitken, elder, from Philadelphia did not attend the remaining sittings of the Conference; and Messrs. Henderson and Marshall attended only as spectators.

Mr. Annan, of the Presbytery of New-York, seemed determined to take advantage of the withdrawal of these members, and in a manner which his brethren thought quite too overbearing, attempted, at this juncture, to force a vote to close the union. His measures, however, did not prevail;

* Vindication of the Associate Presbytery, page 15.

and it was finally agreed that the union should not now be closed, on account of the hesitation of some of the brethren. It was agreed to hold another Conference at Deep-Run, November 24th, of the same year, to bring the matter to a final issue. Mr. Annan then moved, that the two bodies, in the meantime, be allowed to hold occasional communication together. This motion was also lost; as it was believed there could be no communion, unless there was first a union. Thus matters rested from June 10th, 1779, until the next ordinary meeting of the Associate Presbytery, Nov. 17th, of the same year. The course pursued, however, by some of the Associate ministers, respecting the union, greatly diminished the confidence of others of their brethren in the sincerity of their attachment to their professed principles; and consequently their intercourse could not be so harmonious.

At the next meeting of Presbytery, which was held at Oxford, Lancaster county, Pa., on the 17th of November, some transactions relative to the union took place, which deserves notice. The members present were Messrs. James Proudfit, Matthew Henderson, William Marshall, John Rodger, John Smith, James Clarkson, William Logan and John Murray, ministers; William Moor, Hugh Russel, James Leiper, Robert Aitken and John Andrew, elders.

At this meeting, was presented to Presbytery, a petition from the congregation of Pequa and Brandywine, signed by Mr. Proudfit, minister, all the members of session, and most of the members of both congregations; in which the petitioners prayed, that the Associate Presbytery would not close the union with the Reformed Presbytery, unless the latter agreed to the following things:

"1. That they formally assent to the declaration and vindication of our principles about civil government, subjoined to the answers of Mr. Nairn's reasons of dissent.

"2. Give satisfaction about the meaning of some texts of scripture relative to civil government, greatly perverted by them.

"3. Own and acknowledge subordination to the Associate Synod in Scotland."

At this meeting, also, was presented another paper, which had an important influence on the prospects of the union—it was an Overture to this effect: "That Presbytery would now stop further procedure in the proposed union with the Reformed Presbytery—hold a meeting for the express purpose of reviewing our proceedings in this matter—examine the state of matters among ourselves, and endeavor to adjust

any different views which appear to be among us in doctrine, worship, discipline and government—and that the first day of this meeting be spent in fasting, humiliation and prayer; that so we may see eye to eye in this weighty business. Signed, Matthew Henderson, William Marshall, James Clarkson, ministers; Robert Aitkin, William Moor, and James Leiper, elders."

From this paper it appears, that half the Presbytery, and many of the people, were not prepared to agree to the union as matters stood at this time; and could it have been carried by a majority of votes, under such circumstances, it would have been obviously improper to do so. A spirit more favorable to deliberation was manifested at this meeting. The Overture was adopted; and a meeting was appointed in accordance with its recommendation, to be held on the 24th of May, the ensuing year, at Middle Octorara. The Presbytery could not then consistently attend the meeting of the Conference, or take any other steps towards closing the union on the next week, according to the agreement of the last Conference. That agreement to meet at Deep-Run, on the 24th of November, which, at the time of which we speak, would be on the ensuing week, could not be considered as binding on the Presbytery, as it was made by a body to which the Presbytery was not subject. Instead, then, of meeting with the Reformed Brethren at Deep-Run, a committee only was appointed to meet with them. Messrs. Marshall, Clarkson and Smith, were appointed this committee. They were instructed to take the sentiments of the Reformed Presbytery on the following subjects:

"1. Concerning the obligation and renovation of our solemn covenants.

"2. Concerning the Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Associate Presbytery, now the Associate Synod.

"3. Concerning the declaration and vindication of our principles about civil government.

"4. Concerning their views of such texts of scripture as speak of subjection to the civil powers, whether or not they respect the powers that then were, as Matt. xxii. 21: 'Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's.' (Rom. xiii. 1.) 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God.' These points embraced the principal things set forth in Mr. Proudfit's petition; and as there were points upon which the two bodies had publicly professed different views, there was

an evident necessity for ascertaining whether they had yet come to such an unanimity upon them, as would enable them to walk together in their public profession."

At the Conference held on the 24th of November, when it had been agreed that the business of the union should be finally issued, Messrs. Linn and Dobbin, ministers, with William Brown and David Dunwiddie, elders, attended, of the Reformed Presbytery. None of the Associate Presbytery attended, except Mr. Marshall, who expected to meet with Messrs. Smith and Clarkson, his co-Presbyters, and Messrs. Mason and Annan, of the Associate Presbytery of New-York; no reason was offered why these members did not attend. Mr. Marshall declined acting alone, but laid before the Reformed Brethren the instructions given him by his Presbytery, and withdrew. As nothing more relative to the union could be done in the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, until after the meeting appointed for May next year, the whole matter was for the present suspended.

It may here be proper to notice some other facts worthy of record, before resuming the history of the union. At a meeting of Presbytery, held at Oxford, Nov. 9th, 1779, Mr. John Rodger was charged with entertaining and teaching doctrines of an erroneous or at least doubtful tendency. He was one of the Missionaries who came over to this country in 1770, by Synodical authority, and was now pastor of the Associate congregation of Big-Spring. The following were the sentiments complained of, viz:

"That mankind in their fallen state are not under the law as a covenant—that the law written on Adam's heart, and the law given at Mount Sinai, are two distinct laws, and the latter is neither in whole nor in part the Covenant of Works—that Christ Jesus did not, by his obedience and death, purchase any blessings of the Covenant of Grace—and that Christ was not under the law as a covenant, and his obedience to it is no part of our justifying righteousness."

Mr. Rodger professed and defended these sentiments, and although none of the other members would avow them, yet Messrs. Smith, Logan and Murray opposed Presbytery's proceeding against Mr. Rodger by church censure, or judicially condemning his opinions. On the other hand, Messrs. Henderson, Proudfit, Clarkson and Marshall, earnestly contended that his errors should be condemned and himself censured for propagating them.

After long discussion, a vote was carried to proceed judicially to judge of the opinions of Mr. Rodger. Against this

decision Mr. Rodger protested, but would not appeal. His protest was rejected on two grounds, viz:

1. Because it was a protest against the Presbytery's professed principles.

2. Because it contained no appeal to the Associate Synod, to which the Presbytery was subordinate.

The Presbytery held its next meeting at Middle Octorara, in May, 1780, pursuant to their appointment, and the spirit of the Overture of October preceding. The first day of the meeting was accordingly spent in prayer and other religious exercises, and the next day in conferring about Mr. Rodger's sentiments. Mr. R. was heard in defence and explanation of his views. But it now became fully evident that he held principles opposite to the received principles of the Presbytery. Mr. Rodger appears to have been conscientious but not obstinate. He offered to demit his charge and withdraw from communion; and in the mean time to reconsider the points of doctrine in which he differed from his brethren. The Presbytery, however, judged it inconsistent with due faithfulness to dismiss the matter in this manner. The farther consideration of the business was deferred until the next meeting, which took place at Marsh Creek, on the 16th of October of the same year. At this meeting Mr. Rodger did not attend; but petitions were presented from the ministers and sessions of the congregations of Pequa, Brandywine and Philadelphia, praying Presbytery judicially to assert the truth against the attacks made upon it by Mr. Rodger; and also to begin and lead a process against him for maintaining erroneous opinions—This for the glory of God, the honor of truth, and the conviction of Mr. Rodger. Presbytery agreed to the prayer of the petitioners. A libel was accordingly drawn up and ordered to be put into his hands in due from, and he cited to answer to it at the next ordinary meeting of Presbytery, to be holden at Philadelphia, April 4th, 1781. At this meeting the members present were Messrs. James Proudfit, William Marshall, John Smith and James Clarkson, ministers; Daniel Houston, Robert Aitkin and Samuel Harper, ruling elders. The libel against Mr. Rodger for holding and propagating error in doctrine was proven, and he was deposed from the office of the ministry, and excommunicated from the fellowship of the church, with the sentence of the lesser excommunication. And the Presbytery ordered the minister who should first supply in his congregation, to give notice of the sentence against him, and for this purpose a fast day was appointed. At this meeting, also, Mr. Andrew Patton was deposed from the

office of the ministry, and excommunicated with the sentence of the greater excommunication, for immorality in practice.

At the same meeting, also, Mr. James Martin was libelled for falling away from his profession. Mr. Martin's case was briefly this: He being of a somewhat peculiar disposition, took offence on account of the appointments given him by Presbytery, apprehending that they were not so favorable as those given to other members, and under the influence of this feeling he joined the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, now the General Assembly Presbyterian Church. He was without charge. This libel was tried on the 5th of June following, and issued in the suspension of Mr. Martin and the infliction of the lesser excommunication.

Thus was the Presbytery tried on every hand from within and without. It is, however, gratifying to see them aiming at faithfulness, and that amidst all their trials, some were still found faithful to their profession, and through their instrumentality the cause of truth in their hands was still maintained.

Judge Rush, of Pennsylvania, in his address to the jury, in the case of the Spruce-street, Philadelphia, meeting-house, delivered July 8th, 1790, takes the following notice of the above cases.

"In the case of the Rev. John Rodger, it appears from their [the Presbytery's] minutes, that he was deposed in the month of April, 1781, for holding erroneous opinions. The following are the terms of the sentence against him: 'The Presbytery did, and hereby do, *depose* him from the office of the holy ministry, and prohibit him from the discharging of any part of it, aye, and until he retract his errors, and return to his duty.' This gentleman was settled at Big Spring, and the Presbytery ordered the minister who should first supply there, to give notice to the congregation of the sentence against him. It was also pronounced in a solemn manner in Presbytery, by the Moderator, in *verbis de presenti*.

"Mr. Andrew Patton was deposed in the same year, in nearly the same terms.

"On the 5th of June, 1781, the Rev. James Martin was suspended in the following terms:

"'The Presbytery did, and hereby do, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his Church, SUSPEND the said Mr. James Martin from the exercise of his ministerial office, and excommunicate him with the lesser sentence of excommunication, &c.'

"The Presbytery, at the same time, came to an agreement that the members, on the ensuing fast-day, should give notice

to their respective churches, of their proceedings in the cases of Messrs. Rodger, Patton and Martin, 'for the honor of truth and the information of their people,' as they very properly express it.

"In those several instances, we are sensibly affected with the pertinent and serious language employed by this Reverend Body, when they inflict their ecclesiastical censures; and cannot but observe, with the highest degree of approbation, the measures taken to notify the sentence, not only to the church immediately concerned, but to all others under their inspection; a circumstance not to be dispensed with, without violating the plainest dictates of reason and common sense."

During the time that the Presbytery of Pennslyvania was thus engaged in defending truth, and maintaining order and discipline, the Associate Presbytery of New-York, some of the members of which had been most active in urging the union in the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, undertook the business for themselves. And although none of the members of the Reformed Presbytery resided in their bounds, (being all as has been already stated located in Pennsylvania, and within the same bounds occupied by the Associate Presbytery) the New-York Presbytery concluded a union with the Reformed Presbytery, without any member of that Presbytery being present, or having any knowledge of it. This took place in the spring of 1780. This Presbytery now consisted of three ministers, Dr. Clark having removed to South Carolina, but David Annan had been placed in New England.

The following is the notice of the formation of this union in the Ruling Elder, by Mr. Annan, with remarks by Mr. Marshall, in his Vindication of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. He [Mr. Annan] says, page 14, "That the Associate Presbytery of New-York, at New Perth, in the spring of the year 1780, closed the union with the Reformed Presbytery, ordered a copy of their minutes to this purpose, signed by the Moderator and Clerk, to be transmitted to the Reformed Presbytery, and intelligence of the same to be sent to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, which was done accordingly."

"Now, I [says Mr. Marshall,] do declare, that no such intelligence ever came to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and we never knew of this union till we heard of it in the fall of this year, by Mr. Cuthbertson, who went, as I was informed, to supply those belonging to the Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania, who lived at Wallkill, and he never knew of this union till he came there. Then Mr. Annan and

he entered into ministerial and christian communion. He came to this city on his way home, and announced it by reading the articles of union in the meeting house of Mr. Telfair, who, sometime before, in the course of the year, had joined the Reformed Presbytery."*

At a meeting of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, held at Marsh Creek, October 16th, 1780, Mr. Murray was appointed to draw up the ultimatum in plain and unequivocal terms, on which the Presbytery would receive into communion the members of the Reformed Presbytery, and to lay his draft before Presbytery at its next meeting. But before this service was accomplished, Mr. Murray was visited with a paralytic stroke, which prevented him from accomplishing it. But at the next meeting, which was held at Philadelphia, in April, 1781, Messrs. Smith and Marshall were appointed a committee in the place of Mr. Murray. They accordingly presented their draft, which, after undergoing some amendments, was unanimously adopted by Presbytery, and a copy, signed by the Moderator and Clerk, transmitted to the Reformed Presbytery, as follows:

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"Reverend Sirs,

"Union not founded on the holy scriptures cannot conduce to the interest of Christ's kingdom when the terms on which the parties propose to unite labor in obscurity. It is of importance in an explicit and undisguised manner, to unfold our express sentiments in every particular—this we mean to do in the following propositions:

"1. As long as magistrates in the administration of government, do not violate the fundamental articles of the constitution, i. e. while they protect the lives and property of subjects and do not exercise tyranny over their consciences, though these officers of government do not profess the true religion, we ought to be subject to their lawful commands for conscience sake; or in other words, protection and allegiance are reciprocal. Therefore, all men, whether heathens or christians, whether professors of the true religion or apostates from it, have a natural right to form themselves into a body politic, and to elect officers to rule and govern them. The apostacy of Britain from the covenanted reformation, does not deprive them of a right to civil government, and the want of scriptural or covenanted qualifications in their rulers, does not absolve the people of God from an obligation to be obedient to the civil magistrate in lawful commands, as the whole

* Vindication of Presbytery, page 91.

of the magistrate's power lies within the compass of natural principles.

"2. The magistrate's office respects men in their natural rights only;—he is to protect them in their civil and religious liberty, but has no power to judge his subjects in matters of faith or cases of conscience, except their principles affect the life and property of others, and are eversive of good order in the state.

"3. We believe the grand and first object our covenanting forefathers had in eye, in their solemn transactions of national covenanting, viz: in forming the national Covenant of Scotland, and, also, in the solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England and Ireland, was the preservationof the true religion, and the vindication of Christ's cause and testimony, as well as their natural rights—the enjoyment of life and property. With these views they cheerfully acknowledged the authority of God's word, binding their consciences solemnly to swear to the Lord of hosts, that they would walk in his ways, and keep his righteous judgments. From the nature of the duty, and the authority binding to the performance of that duty, it is obvious that the transacting of covenanting in this point of view was competent to them only in an ecclesiastical capacity;—therefore, we, their posterity, a branch of the same church, are bound to prosecute the ends of these covenants, though our political connection with Great Britain be dissolved.

"4. That there is but one special redemption by the death of Christ for all the objects thereof, as he died in one and the same sense for all those for whom in any respect he died.

"5. Christ and the benefits of his purchase cannot be divided, nor can these benefits be divided one from another, and we are only partakers of the benefits Christ has purchased by faith, and whatsoever benefits are received any other way than by faith are not to be reckoned among the benefits Christ has purchased.

"The principles above expressed, are the avowed principles of the Associate Synod, particularly in the declaration of their principles about civil government and the assertion of some gospel truths in opposition to Arminian errors.—We shall be happy to find them cordially received by the members of the Reformed Presbytery.

"6. Our connection with the Associate Synod of Edinburgh, we are determined to maintain agreeable to our ordination vows, as we hope the time is not far off when great advantages will be derived from them to the church under our care.

"7. That on supposition the Reformed Presbytery should fall in with the views of the Associate Presbytery above expressed, no union could be formed or communion obtained till our scruples about the moral character of some of your members are removed. It gives us pain to condescend on these, but in a matter of so much importance, we must be plain.

"1st. It is a matter of public notoriety, that one of your members is frequently overtaken with drink, much to the prejudice of the ministerial character, and to the grief of the Lord's people.

"2d. Another of your members, who is under the higher sentence of excommunication, has settled himself without form or order into a society, as their minister, in a schismatical manner, and without scruple dispenses ordinances both more ordinary and more solemn, to those of an irregular character; and with convincing evidences of a malignant spirit, is fomenting strife and contention in a congregation under our inspection.

"Subscribed JAMES PROUDFIT, *Moderator.*
"WILLIAM MARSHALL, *Presbytery Clerk.*"

This was a plain and unambiguous document. It showed that the members of the Associate Presbytery approved of their professed principles. As yet, they had discovered nothing wrong in them, and they were resolved neither to abandon these nor profess others, the soundness of which they had not found proved by the word of God, for the sake of increasing the number of church members.

This plain declaration of the principles and views of the Presbytery, appeared necessary for restoring mutual confidence among the members themselves, and to have been attended with the happiest results. The interests of vital religion seemed to revive, by the Lord remarkably blessing sacramental occasions in different places in the bounds of Presbytery. After a lapse of some months, an answer was received from the Reformed Presbytery, signed by the Moderator, as the deed of Presbytery, in which it judicially, and it appeared unanimously, refused to accede to the propositions of the Associate Presbytery.*

Thus, the whole scheme of forming a union seemed to be unanimously abandoned by both parties, and sincerely so, at least to all appearance, on the part of the members of the

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* Vindication, page 24.

Associate Presbytery. Even Messrs. Proudfit, Smith and Murray, by whose votes the scheme was afterwards carried, seemed at this time heartily to concur. Mr. Smith was one of the committee who brought in the draft of the letter defining the terms upon which the Presbytery was willing to unite with the Reformed Presbytery. Mr. Proudfit, as Moderator, concurred in the measure, and signed the paper. Mr. Murray, although unable from bodily indisposition, as already noticed, to be present at the meeting of Presbytery at which the letter was adopted, afterwards fully expressed his concurrence as to the course pursued. In a letter to Mr. Marshall, dated May 12th, 1781, he thus expressed himself: "We had Mr. Clarkson with us last week, and I received from him all the particulars of Presbytery. I was glad to hear of so much harmony among you. May it be a token for good! I am afraid the terms you have sent to the Covenanters are too explicit to gain their approbation. But better to be explicit before union than to be so after it, and then differ. I am glad you let them know that we mean to continue our connection with the Associate Synod. May the Lord direct how to act for his glory, and for the church's good."

This apparent termination of the union seemed to give universal satisfaction. Many good men from the first had doubts concerning the warrantab eness of the terms first proposed—others were decidedly opposed to them as unscriptural. They furnished no evidence of any greater unanimity than had subsisted previously between the two bodies. Any previous difference of views between the members of the two bodies would have remained unremoved. But by the terms now proposed had they been agreed to, unanimity would have been secured. And if both parties really believed what they professed, they could not be of one mind, until either these discrepancies were reconciled, or until both parties were satisfied that the points of difference were of no importance, or in other words, involved no scripture doctrine, because, according to the professed belief of both, nothing involving a scripture doctrine could be a matter of indifference. The standing of two of the ministerial members of the Reformed Presbytery was another obstacle, necessary to be removed before a union could be closed on scriptural terms. The one was lying under the public charge of frequent intoxication; and the other under sentence of the higher excommunication, and which had not as yet been removed in an orderly way.

At this time, the Associate Presbytery were unanimously in favor of explicit terms of union, so that if it took place, it

might not afterwards be a matter of dispute to define what were the principles of the united body; or which body had abandoned its principles in the union; or whether the united body was to be formed by giving up the distinguishing principles of both. And all the terms of union before these now proposed by the Associate Presbytery left these things in doubt. By the rejection of these terms the union then appeared to be at rest, and well would it have been for the peace of the church had it never been revived, until there appeared some actual evidences of real agreement in sentiment between the two bodies.

CHAPTER III.

Revival of the Union—Terms drawn and agreed upon by some members privately—Subject again introduced into Presbytery—Basis proposed—Objections stated—Union closed by the casting vote of the Moderator—Protest of Messrs. Marshall, Clarkson, and others—Remarks on the Union—The Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania continued—The organization of the Associate Reformed Synod—Remarks—Notices of those who voted for and acceeded to the Union.

We have already noticed that the Associate Presbytery of New-York had closed a union with the Reformed Presbytery, in the absence and without the knowledge of all the other brethren concerned; if their agreeing to the terms proposed at Pequa, 9th of June, 1779, can be called a union.

Mr. Robert Annan, who was the first to propose the union and its principal advocate, all along, was much grieved and disappointed at the failure of his scheme in the Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

He determined, if possible, still to effect it, and accordingly came to Middle Octorara, where Mr. Smith was then settled; Mr. Smith being about to dispense the Sacrament of the Supper, on the last Sabbath of October, of that year, (1781.) Mr. Annan offered his assistance on Saturday; Mr. Smith hesitated about employing him, as he was now in connection with the Reformed Presbytery. Mr. Annan told him if he did not employ him, he would go next day and preach for Mr. Cuthbertson of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Mr. Smith then agreed to employ him. Thus Mr. Smith on

his own authority and responsibility, entered into christian and ministerial communion with a minister, who was avowedly in another connection. This step on the part of Mr. Smith gave such offence to his congregation, that many communicants declined partaking of the ordinance on that occasion.* Thus both these men practically adopted the system of inter-communion, which has occasioned so much disturbance and confusion in several branches of the church since that time.

On the Wednesday following, the Associate Presbytery met at Pequa. The members present were Mr. Proudfit, Moderator, Messrs. Marshall, Clarkson, Smith and Murray, ministers; and Messrs. David Houston, John M'Kay, Robert Hunter, and William Bailey, ruling elders. Mr. Annan was, also, present, and a motion was made to grant him a seat, which motion did not prevail. Mr. Annan continued, however, to attend the meeting on that, and the succeeding day, until the Presbytery rose. After Messrs. Marshall, Clarkson, and the elders had retired, Mr. Annan, and the other members who remained, went into a Conference upon the subject of reviving the union. At this meeting, which was got up by Mr. Annan and Mr. Smith, the latter of whom had again become zealous for the union, it was agreed that those who were present should act for themselves in the matter of the union, without regard to the minds of their absent brethren.† To this step, though evidently a disorganizing and divisive course, the union scheme, doubtless, ultimately owed its success. Mr. Annan had now become determined to accomplish his object by some means; and if he should not be able to carry all the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania with him, he was determined to carry as many as he could:—to create a division among the members was necessary to fulfil this object. The Presbytery of Pennsylvania consisted at this time of seven ministerial members, viz: Messrs. Henderson, Marshall, Clarkson, Logan, Proudfit, Murray and Smith. And the three who remained after the above meeting of Presbytery, to confer with Mr. Annan, resolved to act independently of the other four. *Divide and conquer*, is a maxim, of the successful application of which, Mr. Annan was not ignorant. And as it was manifest no union with the Reformed Presbytery could be effected in accordance with the principles of the Secession Church, as stated in the propositions agreed to at Philadelphia, in April preceding, another plan was adopted by the brethren who remained at Pequa. A new set of propositions,

* Marshall's Vindication, page 25. † Mr. Annan's Narrative, page 15.

as a basis of union, was drawn up by them and transmitted to the members of the Reformed Presbytery, with a request to meet in Conference on the 29th of the next month, at Donegal.* With this request the members of the Reformed Presbytery complied. This Conference was attended by all the members of the Reformed, but by Mr. Smith only of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and Mr. Annan, who was resolved not to return home until he effected the union, of which scheme he flattered himself as the author. At this meeting which took place on the 29th of November, 1781, the new terms were agreed to on the part of the Reformed Brethren, and, also, by Mr. Smith and Mr. Annan. Mr. Annan, having so far succeeded in carrying his favorite project as to have several members of the Associate Presbytery pledged to adhere to it, whether their brethren did, or did not, and thus having virtually divided the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, returned home. Mr. Smith, who was a man highly gifted, especially as a public speaker, directed all his efforts to secure a majority in favor of the plan, by the next meeting of Presbytery, which was not to take place until the ensuing summer. And in order to try the minds of the people, and to involve, and consequently, as far as possible, to secure those already favorably disposed towards a union on the principles now proposed; he and others fearing to await the decision of Presbytery began immediately to hold ministerial communion with the Reformed Brethren. This was the occasion of much confusion and disturbance in many of the congregations on both sides. The people became divided in sentiment; and confidence and affection cooled among the ministry. In consequence of the great confusion and disorder that now prevailed, it had been agreed that a day of fasting and humiliation should be observed by the members of Presbytery on the day immediately preceding their meeting for business, which was accordingly observed; Mr. Logan preaching in the forenoon from Lam. iii. 40, 'Let us search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord,' and Mr. Clarkson in the afternoon from Isa. lix. 2, 'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.'

The union was again brought up, notwithstanding the unanimity with which the Philadelphia propositions of April, 1781, had been adopted and considered as the ultimatum upon the subject. Several copies of the basis proposed by

* Vindication of the Associate Presbytery, page 27.

Messrs. Smith, Proudfit and Murray, of the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and by Mr. Annan of the Presbytery of New-York in October preceding, and agreed to by the members of the Reformed Presbytery, on the 29th November, at Donegal, were presented to the Presbytery. These copies not agreeing either in language or number of articles, Messrs. Proudfit, Murray and Smith withdrew, and agreed on one which they offered as a true copy, which was read. Before judicially considering it, it was proposed and agreed, that the Philadelphia propositions, and those now presented, should be read over. A vote was taken which should be read first; the majority decided in favor of those now presented. They were accordingly read over, article by article, and after the reading of each, the question was put, "Approve of this article as a part of the basis of union with the Reformed Presbytery or not." The following were the articles of basis, with the exceptions taken to them at the time, noted down by Mr. Marshall, the Clerk of Presbytery.

"Article 1. Election, redemption, and the application thereof, are of equal extent, and for the elect only.

"The question was put, Approve of this article as a part of the basis of union with the Reformed Presbytery? It was carried, Approve. Mr. Marshall moved it might be marked, he did not approve, as he thought this article was not so explicit as the 4th and 5th propositions agreed to at Philadelphia, last year.

"Art. 2. Magistracy is derived from God as the Almighty Creator and Governor of the world, and not from Christ as Mediator.

"Carried, Approve.

"Art. 3. Whereas magistracy proceeds from God as the Creator and Governor of the world, and the profession of the true religion is not essential to the being of civil magistrates: and whereas protection and allegiance are reciprocal, and as the United States of America, while they protect us in life and property, at the same time do not impose any thing sinful on us, we therefore judge it our duty to acknowledge the government of these states, in all lawful commands, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

"Carried, Approve. Mr. Marshall craved it might be marked that he did not approve of it, as it came in the place of the first proposition agreed to last year at Philadelphia.

"Art. 4. The above proposition is not to be understood in an opposite sense to that proposition relative to civil go-

vernment, on which the union between the Associate Presbytery of New-York and the Reformed Presbytery have agreed: but only as a plain and undisguised explication of one point of truth, in which we have the best reason to believe the whole body are united.

"Carried, Approve. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson craved it might be marked that they objected against this, as having a reference to the articles of agreement made by the Associate Presbytery of New-York with the Reformed Presbytery. These articles they conceived to be ambiguous, and it would be difficult to know what the real sense of this article is, when it is only to be explained by those. The articles agreed to in June 1779, at Pequa, are those in which the Associate Presbytery of New-York did coalesce with the Reformed Presbytery, and there are several of them which relate to civil government, and this article does not define the one referred to. By these articles agreed to at Pequa, June 1779, and ratified by the Associate Presbytery of New-York, we are led to believe that scriptural qualifications are necessary to the being of the magistrate when made so by the people—that the kingdom of providence in all the natural ordering of things to their natural end is in the hand of Christ the Mediator—that the Bible is the formal rule of magistrates in the execution of their office—all which are Erastian, Popish, and dangerous tenets, which have been a source of great distraction and ruin in the world, and therefore we choose to oppose them.

"Art. 5. As no opposition of sentiment, relative to the important duty of covenanting, appears on either side; it is mutually agreed, that the consideration of it be referred to the councils and deliberations of the whole body.

"Carried, Approve. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson craved leave, and it was granted, that it might be marked that they objected to this, because it was a new mode of union, to refer points in question to be decided by the body when united. It is well known Seceders and the Anti-government party have very different views about covenanting; the first are for renewing the covenants of their ancestors in a suitableness to their own circumstances, the last adhere to the solemn covenants in their original form. In place of this Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson declared their adherence to the third proposition drawn up last year at Philadelphia.

"Art. 6. Though no real or practical subordination to the Associate Synod of Edinburgh, in a consistency with Presbyterian principles, can be pled, yet from the most wise

and important considerations, the former connections, whatever they have been, shall remain as before, notwithstanding of this coalescence.

"Carried, Approve. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson craved leave, and it was granted, that they objected to this article, as it left our connections with the Associate Synod quite undefined, and that they adhered to the sixth proposition agreed to last year at Philadelphia."

After reading and considering this paper, and the objections to it that were recorded, the Presbytery adjourned until next morning at nine o'clock. At the close of this sederunt, a circumstance transpired, which shows to what a crisis the Presbytery had then come, and how much may often depend upon a single member. Mr. Joseph Miller, one of the ruling elders, who was considered favorable to the union, asked leave of absence for the next day. Those who were now advocating the union, knowing his sentiments, would not consent, and he accordingly kept his seat next day, and voted for closing the union.

On the next day the union was closed on the above terms, by the casting vote of the Moderator, Mr. Proudfit. On the final vote, the AYES were, Messrs. Smith, Murray, Logan, ministers; Messrs. Miller and Bogle, elders: NOES, Messrs. Marshall and Clarkson, ministers; Messrs. Hunter, Thompson and Moor, elders.

But as the proceedings of this day have had a very important influence on the interests of the Secession Church,—as they gave rise to an entirely new religious denomination, constituted on principles differing from either of the bodies from which it originated,—as they added another to the catalogue of divisions in the visible church, already unhappily too numerous,—as they nearly extinguished the light and influence of the Testimony of one witnessing body of christians in America, and left the other without a ministry at all,—they shall be given in the language of the records of the court itself, made at the time.

"PEQUA MEETING-HOUSE, *June* 13, 1782.

"At which time and place the Associate Presbytery being met, and constituted with prayer by the moderator, members present as yesterday—resumed the affair of the union. It was moved and seconded, that the Presbytery now consider the propositions agreed to at Philadelphia last year, agreeable to the resolve of yesterday; this was warmly opposed, and it was said that what was done yesterday, rendered this un-

necessary. After a long course of reasoning on this subject, the question was put, 'Whether the propositions agreed to at Philadelphia, by the Presbytery judicially, or those agreed to at Donegal last November, by some brethren, are best calculated to pave the way for the union?' The roll being called and votes marked, it was carried by a majority—those of Donegal. The question was then put, 'Shall the propositions agreed to yesterday be the basis of the union?' and the members were desired to speak their minds at considerable length on this question, and their sentiments were very opposite. The question was then stated, 'Close the union on the footing of the propositions agreed to yesterday or not?'—Before the vote was taken Mr. Smith was employed, as the mouth of the Presbytery, in prayer for divine direction.—Then the roll was called, and votes marked, it was found the members were equally divided; whereupon the moderator was called upon to give the casting vote, who, without making a pause, or any motion for accommodation, instantly voted for closing the union on the terms proposed. Whereupon, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson, ministers, Robert Hunter, James Thomson, and Alexander Moor, elders, did crave leave to protest against this decision, which was granted, and the Presbytery adjourned for three quarters of an hour, to give time to prepare the protest. Closed with prayer.

"The same day and place, at four o'clock, P. M, the Presbytery met, and constituted with prayer by the moderator; members present, as above; called for the protest, which was presented and read by Mr. Marshall, the tenor whereof follows:

"'Pequa, *June* 13, 1782.

"'It is with sensible pain, that we the subscribers are driven to the dire necessity of taking this step; but as we cannot in conscience, go along with our brethren in their mode of closing the union with the Presbytery called Reformed, and as we desire to promote the glory of God, and maintain his cause among our hands in purity, and being persuaded this decision is injurious to both; wherefore, we do in our name, and in the name of all that may adhere to us, protest against this decision, and that for the following reasons:

"1. It is contrary to the word of God.—1 Cor. i. 10. 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.' 2 Tim. 1. 13. 'Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast

received of me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. Jude 3. 'Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.'—*Gr.* 'Contend as in agony.' Phil. i. 27. 'Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, that when I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs; that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.' Mat. v. 19. 'Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so to do, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.' Rev. iii. 11. 'Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.'

"2. —To our ordination vows, by which we are bound to abide by our received principles founded on the word of God. All the ministers in the communion of the Associate Synod have answered, in the affirmative, this question: 'Quest. 5. Do you approve of the Act, Declaration, and Testimony, for the doctrine worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland, enacted and emitted by the Associate Presbytery; and do you in your judgment disapprove of the several steps of defection, both in former and present times, condemned in said act, as contrary to the word of God—the confession of faith—the national covenant of Scotland—and the solemn league and covenant of the three nations?' Also at their license and ordination, they answered, in the affirmative, this question: 'Quest. 6. Do you promise that you will submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery, agreeable to the word of God, and to be subject to them in the Lord, and to the other Presbyteries of the association, and the Associate Synod, as the Lord in his providence shall cast your lot; and do you promise that you will maintain the spiritual unity and peace of, and that you will follow no divisive courses from, the reformed covenanted church of Scotland, either by falling in with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the aforesaid covenanted cause: and this you promise, through grace, notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution you may meet with, in essaying the faithful discharge of your duty herein?'

"3. This scheme of union is contrary to the bond for renewing our solemn covenants, sworn and subscribed by all the ministers belonging to this Presbytery, and by many of our people. The words of it are, 'We avouch the Lord to be our God, and in the strength of his grace we promise and swear, by the great name of the Lord our God, that we shall

walk in his ways, keep his judgments and commandments and hearken to his voice; and particularly, that we shall, by the Lord's grace, continue and abide in the profession of the faith and obedience of the aforesaid true reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, and Presbyterian church government and discipline, and that we shall, according to our several places and callings, contend and testify against the contrary evils, errors, and corruptions; particularly Prelacy, Deism, Arianism, Arminianism, and every other error eversive of the doctrine of grace; also Independency, and Latitudinarian tenents.'

"4. This scheme of union is unhinging this Presbytery from its original constitution, and is a breach of the covenant mutally entered into by ministers and people, when the pastoral relation took place, as it is directly contrary to the call which contains this solemn covenant. The preamble to all the calls that are given in the Associate body, runs thus—'We undersubscribers, elders and other members of the Associate congregation of ————————, who have acceded to the Lord's cause and testimony, as professed, witnessed for, and maintained by the Associate Synod, and the several Presbyteries in Scotland and Ireland subordinate thereto, as the only lawful and right constitute courts of Christ to which we can submit in the Lord.'

"5. This plan of union throws the Presbytery destitute of that source of supply of ministers it has hitherto had from our connections with the Associate Synod, by joining those who refuse to own any subjection to them.

"6. It has a tendency to rend our churches to pieces, and throw stumbling blocks in the way of the Lord's people.

"7. The terms of union are not clear and explicit, and both parties put their own interpretation on them in favor of their received principles.

"8. This union is most irregularly gone into by some members of this Presbytery.

"9. This scheme of union is most tyrannical, and an invasion on the rights of the Christian people—because entered into without the people being previously informed of the terms on which it is made, and of the alterations made in their religious profession by this Presbytery.

"And we crave leave to bring in further reasons of protest, in due time, and illustrating the above reasons as we see cause. We protest against further proceeding in this union, and we appeal to the reverend the Associate Synod, at their first ordinary meeting we have access to.

"Signed, William Marshall, James Clarkson, ministers; Robert Hunter, James Thomson, and Alexander Moor, elders.

"The question was then stated, 'Shall this protest and appeal be admitted?' It was carried, Admit—but on a review of its containing an appeal, the vote was reversed, and carried, Not admit.

"Mr. Marshall then read another protestation to this effect: 'That whereas the Presbytery have tyrannically refused our protest and appeal, we are under the necessity of protesting that the powers of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, are now vested only in us who adhere to the true principles and constitution of said Presbytery.'

"Likewise signed, at Pequa, June 13th, 1782, by William Marshall, James Clarkson, ministers; Robert Hunter, James Thomson, and Alexander Moor, elders.

"Whereupon the protestors withdrew to the session house, and considering themselves, on good grounds, to be the true Associate Presbytery, now constituted, but by this affair deprived of their moderator, they proceeded immediately, without constituting a-new, to choose another, and Mr. Clarkson was chosen, and took the chair accordingly; and after finishing what business came before them, adjourned to meet at Mrs. Johnston's this evening at seven o'clock. Closed with prayer."

On these important transactions, which deeply affected the church of Christ in this country, we may pause for a few remarks.

There was evidently on the part of the majority an abandonment of their former professed principles, to which up to this time, and indeed for some time afterwards, they still professed to adhere. By this act they broke off connection with the Associate Synod to which they had vowed submission in the Lord. The ostensible ground taken for refusing the protest was, that it contained an appeal to the Synod in Scotland. If the prevailing party had intended to remain in communion with their brethren in Scotland, they could not consistently with Presbyterian principles refuse to admit an appeal to the Synod, and especially on such a question as this; for in Presbyterianism a Presbytery must be subordinate to a Synod, as a session or particular congregation is to a Presbytery. In answer to this it was alleged, that as the civil or political connection between this country and Great Britain was now dissolved, it would be improper to admit an appeal in religious matters to an ecclesiastical judicature situated in that country, of which we were now politically independent.

On the other hand it was plead that the true church of Christ is ONE,—is unaffected by political divisions and revolutions. "My love my undefiled is *one*." (Song vi. 9.) Religion, like philosophy, knows no country.

The question which would have arisen from the protest and appeal would simply be, 'Have the majority, in forming the union on the present basis, acted according to the received principles of the Associate Synod?' All that would have been necessary in this case, would have been the submission of the papers,—to have put the Synod in possession of all the necessary information to form a judgment on the premises.

The manner in which this measure had been brought about was disorderly, and inconsistent with the prerogative of a Presbytery; because it was introduced and issued in Presbytery at the same meeting. A matter of this nature affecting the constitution and integrity of the body, could not be brought forward and issued, even in the supreme judicature, according to the rules of order, without submitting it to the consideration of the inferior and subordinate courts; much less is it competent for a Presbytery or Session to give a final decision on a question involving the integrity of the whole body, consisting of many presbyteries and congregations, until it has been submitted to the whole body. The absurdity and disorganizing tendency of the contrary course, would be manifest in civil affairs. Could one of the states of our confederated political union make treaties and form alliances which affected the integrity of the union, without the consent and aprobatiaon of the general government? Certainly not. And until this step was taken, all the members of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania were not only united together themselves as one body, on the principles set forth in the standards of the Associate Synod of Scotland; but they were united with that Synod also; the constituent parts of which were pledged to each other on these principles; and those who departed from them, then dissolved the bond of union. The very act by which this union was formed was the dissolution of one much more extensive, and cemented by many years of intimate fellowship in a public profession.

Messrs. Marshall and Clarkson, and the other protestors did not form a new and distinct Presbytery; but were, and remained to be, the true Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, holding its original principles and constitution. This the Associate Synod declared in their act condemning the union, and approving of the course pursued by those who protested against it. As this act forms an important link in the history

of the Associate Church in America, it is proper it should be preserved entire. It is also an authoritative refutation of a misrepresentation concerning the rise of the Associate Church and Synod in this country, lately given to the public.* The act is as follows:

"Act of the Associate Synod in Scotland concerning the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. At Edinburgh, the thirty-first day of August, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five years.

"The Associate Synod took into their consideration, an *Address* to them by the Associate Presbytery of *Pennsylvania*, dated at *Philadelphia* on the 30th of October, 1784; which was laid before this Synod in *April* last, but upon which they could not then overtake any procedure;—as also an *address* to them by the same Presbytery, dated at Pequa on the 14th of April last, now laid before this Synod:—In both of which addresses, they represent the great difficulties and discouragements through which they have been assaying to maintain the Testimony among their hands in connection with, and subordination to, this Synod; particularly from the vehement opposition managed against them by their separating brethren,—and the activity with which some of these were endeavoring to get them crushed altogether, and their people ensnared;—representing also that they had published a Narative, Declaration and Testimony,—for adapting the Reformation Testimony among the hands of this Synod, to the present state of matters in North America, and craving to have the judgment of this Synod concerning the same, for strengthening their hands in so far as they may be found to have done well, and for correcting them in so far as they may be found in any mistake; And in the last of which addresses, they crave to have a minister or ministers sent over for their assistance; as the applications to them for sermon, are more than they can well answer.

"The Synod, after serious deliberation on this subject, with prayer for the Lord's countenance and direction,—did, and hereby do, unanimously agree in expressing great satisfaction and in holding it for matter of great thankfulness to the Lord, that their brethren of the said Presbytery have been enabled

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* The Associate Reformed Presbytery of Caledonia, N. Y., in a Report on the subject of "Union and communion," laid before the Associate Reformed Synod of New-York, which met in Salem, N. Y., Sept., 1838, have fallen into an error on this point. Speaking of this union and the protest and withdrawal of Messrs. Marshall and Clarkson, they say, "It was the *beginning* of what is now called the Associate Church and Synod."

to proceed with much honesty, faithfulness and zeal, according to their ordination vows and solemn covenant engagements, in maintaining the Lord's cause among their hands, against the cause of their separating brethren. More particularly,—whereas the generality of the ministers who originally belonged to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, having been sent over to North America at different times by this Synod, viz. Messrs. James Proudfit, Mathew Henderson, John Mason, Robert Annan, John Smith, and William Logan, have thrown off their former connection with and subordination to this Synod, so as to be no longer part of the same witnessing body with them; as they have formed themselves into a new state of union and church communion with several ministers of a pretended reformed Presbytery in Pennsylvania, belonging to the anti-government party in Scotland; also with Mr. John Rodger, who had been sent over by this Synod, but had been afterwards deposed and laid under the sentence of the lesser excommunication by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, for errors taught and maintained by him; and likewise with two ministers belonging to the Synod of the separating brethren in Scotland, one of whom is lying under the sentence of the higher excommunication by this Synod; and have embodied themselves with all these ministers in a new constitution of three Presbyteries, under what they call the Associate Reformed Synod; upon terms so loose and general as to consist with the former different principles and professions of these ministers,—while subversive of the Reformation Testimony among the hands of this Synod, and casting the door open for the grossest Latitudinarianism: Therefore this Synod did and hereby do declare, that they disclaim all connection with and acknowledgement of the said constitution, and the body so constituted; and that they hold all the ministers above particularly named, in respect of their new union and constitution, to be in a state of apostacy from the said Reformation Testimony, and their witnessing profession,—under a gross and manifest breach of their ordination vows, and solemn covenant engagements to maintain the same.

"And whereas at a meeting of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania in June, 1782, when the aforesaid union was voted, Messrs. William Marshall and James Clarkson, Ministers and members of the said Presbytery; with James Thomson from Pequa, Robert Hunter from Philadelphia, and Alexander Moor from Muddy Creek, Ruling Elders and Commissioners from their respective Sessions to the said meeting

of Presbytery; did protest against closing the said union, and appealed to this Synod; and whereas upon a refusal to let the said protest and appeal have a place in the minutes of that meeting, these Ministers and Elders did protest against the said refusal; and that the constitution and powers of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania were rightfully vested in them, as being now the only members adhering to the original constitution and covenanted principles thereof; upon which they immediately withdrew, and constituted themselves as the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania accordingly.

"Therefore the Synod did and hereby do acknowledge and assert that the said Ministers and Elders did well, in taking the said step, as all the other members then present had, by their voting the said union, cast themselves out of that Presbytery, or given up with any further existence in it, according to the said original constitution and covenanted principles thereof in connection with and subordination to this Synod. Wherefore the Synod did and hereby do assert, recognise and justify the constitution of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, as claimed by the said protesting Ministers and Elders; and they acknowledge the said Mr. William Marshall, and Mr. James Clarkson, with Mr. Thomas Beveridge, lately sent over by this Synod to take part with them in the Lord's work, together with the Elders from their respective Sessions, as making up the only and rightly constituted Presbytery of Pennsylvania, in connection with and subordination to this Synod, and a part of the same witnessing body with them.

"And though this Synod, at their meeting in September, 1783, did appoint a committee of their number to prepare a draught of an Address by this Synod, to all the Ministers and people in North America, formerly and presently in connection with them, on both sides of the present breach; which draught has been prepared some time ago, extending to a considerable length; Yet the Synod find it impracticable for them amidst the multiplicity of their other business, to gain time for a public reading and discussing and judging of the same; while also it might not be suitable to the present confirmed state of the breach. Wherefore the Synod expect, that their brethren of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania will now satisfy themselves on that head, with the countenance and encouragement given to them by this present Act.

"And with regard to the Narrative, Declaration and Testimony, which has been published by that Presbytery; though some Ministers of this Synod, who have perused the same, do

express great satisfaction with it in the general state and tenor thereof; as what may be of singular use for supporting the truths of the Gospel and the Reformation causes, against the errors and corruptions prevailing in that part of the world; yet as very few copies of that publication have come to this country, so that the generality of the members of Synod have not had access to see it; the Synod can therefore form no judgment at present concerning it. But they expect that their brethren of the said Presbytery will likewise satisfy themselves on that head, with the countenance and encouragement given them by this present Act; being all that the Synod find competent to them upon this subject.

"Moreover, as the Synod reckon it their indispensable duty, and have it for matter of hearty concern, to strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of their brethren in the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, concerning the management of the Lord's work in their hands; so they unanimously resolve to exert themselves, according to their capacity, in doing so: Particularly, by such further mission for the assistance of these brethren, as they can judge proper; and so on as they can find it practicable.

"And, finally, the Synod do express great satisfaction with the honesty and steadfastness of the people in that part of the world, who are continuing in adherence to our witnessing profession under the inspection of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania: And they earnestly obtest all the Ministers and people of their former concern in North America to return to their duty in connection with that Presbytery; for maintaining the Reformation cause, in subordination to this Synod.

"Extracted by

"JAMES MORISON, *Syn. Clerk.*"

The great design of the union held out at the time by its advocates, was to lessen the number of divisions in the church, but the effect has been to add another to the list. For the Reformed Presbytery in Great Britain, disapproving of the union, and the people of that denomination here not generally concurring in it, other ministers were soon sent in to take the place of those who had deserted their cause, by making the union; and thus that body continued to maintain a distinct organization in this country.* And the Associate Church, as has been

* See the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod in America, Considered, Disowned and Testified against, by the Reformed Presbytery in Scotland.

shown, still continued her organization. Hence, instead of two denominations differing on conscientious grounds, clearly defined, as was the case before this union; it gave us a third, the statement of whose principles and whose constitution, could not and did not meet the approbation of either of the original societies. It was not satisfactory to the individuals themselves. Mr. Proudfit declared "*the constitution a dead thing to him:*" Messrs. Henderson, Smith, and Logan withdrew from it on account of the ambiguity and unsatisfactory statement of the principles of the new body.*

Those who formed the union, until they dissolved the connection by their own act, were constituent parts of and subordinate to the Associate Synod and the Reformed Presbytery respectively. These two bodies were unanimous in condemning the union, as subversive of the principles of their constitution, as they show by their acts respecting it.

It was plead by the friends of the union, especially those who were or had been members of the Associate Church, that there was no difference between their new and their former profession. If this were really the case, there could be nothing gained by the change, and the causing of another division was a great evil. This is often plead at the present day. But the frequency with which it was plead then, gave occasion to the publication of a tract, entitled "The difference, briefly stated, between the profession made by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania and that made by the Associate Reformed Synod." Although this tract appeared without a name, it was well known to be from the pen of Mr. Beveridge. It is a candid statement of the difference.†

One of the most prominent objections to the new society, was the latitudinarian scheme of church communion, which the constitution favored. It was then alledged, that if the principle was not corrected, that either sound doctrine and discipline would be banished from that church, or the society itself would be eventually dissolved.‡ The result has proved that these apprehensions were not groundless. Though the new society increased rapidly for a time, (owing doubtless to the pliability of its terms of communion,) and though these effects did not immediately appear, yet the divisions and disorder that have prevailed in the body since 1810, only twenty-eight years after the society was erected, prove the justness of these apprehensions.

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*See Appendix D. †Appendix E.

‡ Dr. Anderson's letter respecting the union.

These results have been feelingly and eloquently described as realities, in a Report by the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Caledonia, in 1838. That Presbytery in their Report seem sensible of the error of the practice, and its evil consequences; but they seem not aware of the origin of the evil of which they complain. In remarking on the account which Dr. Mason gave of his conduct, when he offended on this point—having promised to discontinue the practice as soon as his congregation could obtain a separate place for public worship, and acknowledged that the practice of intercommunion in the sacraments was only allowable by the constitution in extraordinary cases; the Presbytery remark:—"But how soon was this avowed purpose and solemn pledge forgotten! The main, if not the sole ground of defence taken at this time, having served a temporary purpose, was soon after not only forsaken but assailed by those who took it, as an obstacle directly in the way of their further progress; and the principles of the constitution, stretched and bent in the first place, until it was broken, to suit a particular case, was at length entirely cast aside, on its being found sufficiently broken by that first act of violence to render it inapplicable to *any particular* case. The distinction between occasional and stated communion, was declared to have no existence in the Bible or in the Confession. According to the new system which strove to supplant the old, all communion must be indiscriminate and common: to be true and proper christian communion, it must be totally catholic, yea, "catholic,"—that is the favorite and imposing epithet; of which, however, in connection with "church," Protestant churches have reason to be suspicious, on more accounts than one. The grand theory, the splendid scheme of Protestant Catholicism has dazzled not a few out of their eye-sight, and left them to wander self-pleased and confident, away from "minor distinctions," and "subordinate doctrines," for a while *within*, but at last *without* the confines of visible christianity. When there is ruin in the end there is danger in the beginning. That danger was not, however, heeded. Our church was required, amid the thunderings of many anathemas from the lips of frail humanity, to lay aside all that was strict and restrictive in her communion, even at the hazard and sacrifice of being strict in any thing else; and to join on terms undefined and undefinable, in a boundless and confused communion, with the whole visible church, without being even furnished with the means of knowing what were to be reckoned visible churches—bound to recognize many large communities as christians, and rightfully entitled to be

esteemed as fellow communicants, without any known or stated rule of recognition being given."*

This Presbytery seem designedly to refrain from specifying particularly, "what the consequences were, to those ministers and churches, which went into this promiscuous communion;" it is however added—"But highly favored are those, whose eyes the Lord opened, and whose hearts he alarmed, to the jeopardy in which they were placed, to see it in time to avoid it." Experience has now taught many the correctness of this remark, who refused to hear the warning voice long since lifted against both the principle and the practice. The very evils, afterwards described in general terms, in the above mentioned report, and ascribed to a perversion of the principles on which the union was founded, were particularly pointed out in the tract already alluded to by the late venerable Dr. Anderson, as necessarily growing out of the principles recognized in the first constitution, as amended by that church in 1790—and the preceding pages of this sketch, show that the practice was introduced by Mr. Annan, before even the union was closed.

The following quotation from the same report, shows in unequivocal terms the present views on this subject of that portion of this church which the Presbytery of Caledonia composes—"At the same time that these departures from the scriptural order of the church were persisted in, providences, affecting the Synod, [Associate Reformed] and the public institutions and interests of which it had charge, were adverse. Churches declined—infant churches in important stations, passed into the hands of others,—the spirit of the whole body was gone—peace and union broken—funds failed—the principal Professor, from ill health, was obliged to relinquish his duties, and the seminary was at last suspended. The General Synod, ceasing to be a safe guide to the churches, ceased also to be a guide to itself: giving itself up to a well-meaning, but mistaken leader, it was led first into a forest of general principles, then on to the sunny but barren mountain of the Catholic scheme, till the wandering Synod was completely lost, and was glad to betake itself, like a strayed sheep, into a strange fold, where its fine fleece, as was afterwards proved, was more prized than its poor body." Had such sentiments been entertained on this subject by Messrs. Annan, Mason,† Proudfit and others, who co-operated with them, that union

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* Caledonia Presbytery's Report, pages 5, and 6.
† See Appendix F.

had never been formed. The Great Head and King of Zion saw, however, a necessity for trying his people in this way. But if these sentiments pervade that whole body, and a corresponding practice ensue, may we not indulge the hope, that there will yet be such a returning to former principles and attainments, that the wound then given to the unity of the church, may be healed? "Thus saith the LORD: stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." "Then will God give his people *one heart* and *one way*, that they may serve him forever for the good of them and their children after them." "Then shall they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and will with one mind and mouth lift their voice up together in praising God." And then will they "mark and avoid all those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine learned." But to return to our narrative.

Before closing our remarks on the union, there is one other thing, which in justice ought not to be passed over without notice—it is this: that on the part of those members of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, who voted for the union, there was a breach of faith towards their brethren. At the meeting of Presbytery at Philadelphia, April 4, 1781, the Presbytery *unanimously* agreed, that the terms then agreed upon, and transmitted to the Reformed Presbytery, were the only terms upon which a union could be formed. This was a judicial transaction of the Presbytery. It was also unanimous. These terms were with equal solemnity and unanimity rejected by the other Presbytery. If any faith was to be given to their judicial proceedings, every member of that Presbytery had a right to consider himself solemnly pledged to others by that decision not to receive, nor to close the union on any other terms. If such decisions of judicial bodies, are not regarded as mutual pledges between the members, and if they are not kept with good faith, society can not exist. Yet that union was the result of a violation of that faith; and however well intended it may have been, the principle upon which it was organized is disorganizing.

There was another step highly disorderly, and which in any society constituted on and regulated by Presbyterian principles, would have nullified the act of union, and consequently all subsequent acts resting on that deed. This step was the *introducing* and *closing* of the union at the same meeting of the court. It has been a rule, time immemorial, in Presbyterian discipline, that no change in the terms of communion, nor any

rule affecting the constitutional principles of the church, can be enacted, by even the supreme court, until such change has been submitted to the inferior judicatories for consideration in the form of an *overture;* and until the whole church in that way has had an opportunity of expressing her mind on the proposed change.

Those who had acceded to the union, met in Convention at Philadelphia, in October afterwards; they arranged themselves into three Presbyteries, constituted a Synod and assumed the name of the Associate Reformed Synod.* It is not intended here further to trace the history of this society, the principal events are recent and within the recollection of most persons at the present day, who have been attending to the movements that have been taking place in the religious communities.

But before dismissing this part of our subject, it will be proper to give a brief sketch of the subsequent history of the individuals who joined in the union. The first effects of the union, so far as particular congregations in the Presbytery of Pennsylvania were concerned, were very disastrous. Most of the congregations even of those ministers who went into it, were far from being satisfied. And in all these were divisions of greater or less extent, some of which may hereafter be particularly noticed.

One of the first changes produced by the union, was the removal of Mr. Proudfit from the united congregations of Pequa and Brandywine. It has been stated that Mr. Proudfit was Moderator at the time of the closing of the union, and that it was carried only by his casting vote. The spirit and manner in which the whole business was conducted, gave to most of the people who witnessed it, much dissatisfaction. These events having been transacted in the principal branch of Mr. Proudfit's charge, a more than equal share of responsibility, in the estimation of the people, rested on him. His congregation, therefore, disapproving of the union, adhered to the Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

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* The Reformed Presbytery in Scotland, with which the Reformed Presbytery in this country was in fellowship, in their Testimony disowning, and testifying against the union, complain, that the part of the name borrowed from them is not placed foremost. "The appellation," say they, *The Associate Reformed Synod, resigns the honors of the day to the Seceding body,* [Associate,] and seems to indicate a predilection for their Testimony: if the thing comprehended under the name had been right, the title of the court with more propriety would have read, "The Reformed Associate Synod." Condemnation, &c., p. 4.

The friends of truth need feel neither ambition nor jealousy, to have their name assumed first or last by those who are in a course of defection from the truth.

The congregation in Salem, N. Y., in consequence of the removal of Dr. Clark to South Carolina, was now vacant; and as the principles of the union were but little known among the people in this section of the country, (no account of it having been published for sometime afterwards,) it was generally acquiesced in. Mr. Proudfit was settled in Salem, where he remained until his death. He continued to adhere to the union; but his adherence was supposed to be owing more to the circumstances in which he was placed, than to his approbation of the course he had taken. It is still reported by credible persons, who had had an opportunity of knowing, that he more than once expressed his regret, for having given the casting vote in favor of the union.

The following letter, written by Mr. Proudfit to Mr. John Harsha, (late of Argyle,) who had been a ruling elder in the congregation of Salem, shows that while he censured those persons who would not join in the union, yet he did not give his approbation to the principles of it himself.

"New Perth, Dec. 15th, 1785.

"My Dear Sir—

"The active part you took in calling me to this corner of the Lord's vineyard, and the affectionate regard you discovered after my approach, entitle me to use that freedom and plainness, which, I apprehend, your late conduct requires. Allow me to ask, what means your total withdrawment from meetings of session? What means the cool reserve you manifest in your deportment respecting your religious connections? Is it because of the Constitution? How can that be? seeing we have set it aside upwards of fifteen months since, and never to this day took it up; to me it is a dead thing; nor had it ever any influence in producing any alteration, either in doctrine, worship or order.

"I am free to profess to you, or any one that may inquire, my warm attachment to Covenanted Reformation, in all its branches, as exhibited in our excellent Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Directory, and form of Church Government. If my heart deceive me not, it is my ardent desire to have my mind impressed, and my practice regulated by their salutary truths. You are witness that it has been my endeavor to instruct the people committed to my charge, both publicly, and from house to house, in the above truths and duties, according to the grace given to me, since I came amongst you. May I humbly apply the words of the Apostle, 'For we are not as many that corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. I have renounced

the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'" (1 Cor. ii. 17. iv. 2.)

"Remember, sir, you are under solemn covenant and promise to attend and encourage my ministry by the call you put into my hand, while I exhibit the doctrine which is according to godliness; nor can you be remiss about it without incurring the guilt of breach of solemn engagement, unless you can bring forth such reasons as will bear the touchstone of the Holy Scriptures. It is probable you have jealous apprehensions of my fidelity and integrity. I cannot account for suspicious thoughts; says Paul, 'but with me it is a very small matter, that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.' Is it not the duty of church members to be steadfast in maintaining their religious connections, after the example of the primitive christians, (Acts ii. 42,) to be diligent in improving them, and fearful of breaking them?

"Can you say that you cannot hold communion with us in a consistence with truth and a good conscience, and is it for conscience sake you have withdrawn? Does your conduct flow from a well informed judgment? Is it the fruit of a solemn prayer to the Father of lights for direction? If it is not, suffer me to tell you, for I deal with your conscience, you are verily guilty concerning your brethren. It is hateful in the sight of God to proceed in any thing of importance without asking counsel at his mouth. At any rate, I am obliged to blame your conduct for irregularity. You have withdrawn without giving any reason for so doing. This is not orderly walking. It is a breach upon the unity and order of the church of Christ, contrary to Presbyterian principles. If they are real grievances you labor under, I request you to tell us plainly what they are: that is certainly a duty you owe to your brethren.

"Does it offend you that I have sometimes preached the necessity of peace and brotherly love? Let this be my apology; it is witnessed of our blessed Master, he came and preached peace to them that are far off, and to them that are nigh. (Eph. ii. 17.) Christ is the prince of peace, his gospel is the gospel of peace, his ministers are ambassadors of peace, and his people are sons of peace. I wish for no peace among us, but what has truth for its foundation, the Spirit for its author, the word for the rule, and holiness for the ornament

of it. Peace, not so qualified, is a conspiracy and combination against the God of truth.

"I shall give you a few sentences from a late sensible writer, 'Alas,' says he, 'for the divisions of Reuben! Should they not cause great searchings of heart? they are evil things in themselves, very evil; but they are only the alarming symptoms of worse. Yes, my friends, we are alienated from Christ, and must be estranged from one another. He is the corner stone of the church, the more closely people are joined to him in their exercise, the more firmly they are cemented among themselves. Jealousies and emulations, variance and strife among them, demonstrate they are fallen from him. Answer me, you who believe, is the spirit of forbearance extinguished in your breasts, or ready to expire? How then, pray, does your soul prosper? Is fellowship with your brethren as pleasant and fruitful as it has been? Is your communion with God as intimate, sensible and refreshing? Have you wanted enlargements at a throne of grace, and has the gospel lost nothing of its relish?'

"Thus far he. It is a wise observation of Solomon, "as an ear-ring of gold and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover on an obedient ear." Faithful are the wounds of a friend. May I hope that my admonition and counsel will be acceptable to you. Be assured, it does not proceed from the gall of an enemy, but from the unfeigned affection of

"Sir, your humble serv't and sincere well wisher,

"JAS. PROUDFIT."

It will be proper here to insert Mr. Harsha's answer to this letter, because the answer corroborates what is observed in another place, namely, that the people were deceived by the union, and understood neither its design nor effects. Mr. Harsha's letter is plain, but sensible and judicious, and brings home to Mr. Proudfit some facts and truths which could not, we think, fail to reach the conscience of an honest man. It is written in a christian spirit, and is strikingly characteristic of the guileless simplicity and integrity, which distinguished its amiable author all the days of his life.

"New Perth, Dec. 1785.

"Rev. and Dear Sir—

"I received your letter, and thought of sending you an answer before now, but I am a poor hand at speaking or writing, and still worse at inditing. It is more difficult for me to express my mind in this way, than it would be for many others; but as I have one to deal with, who, it is to be hoped, will not take advantage of my weakness, I shall adventure to

do as I can; and as you have obliged me in dealing freely with me according to your views of matters, (for I think plain dealing is the best,) I hope you will allow me the same freedom in my place.

"Dear Sir, I did not think that either you or the session had been so ignorant of the reasons of my withdrawal, as you seem to be. I thought I had spoken so plainly that you might have understood me; one reason why I was not fuller and plainer was, I saw that those who came out plump and plain, were branded as the troublers of society, this moved me to withdraw as quietly as I could. I thought if I could do no good I would do no harm; but I see plainly that neither way will escape your censure. But I think my conscience tells me, in my most serious moments, that those who were most plain, and who stood most clear of compliances, came most cleanly off.

"I have seen some of my brethren, whom I much respect, who, hoping that things would be better, have complied, and been drawn off their feet into that, which, but a little before, they had declared through grace they never would do. Now, Sir, in order to give some reasons for my conduct in that part where you seem to allege I have been most disorderly, viz: in my signing your call, and my affectionate regard to you for some time afterward, and my now withdrawing from your ministry.—I hope you will grant that I then thought you stood upon the footing of the Secession Testimony, and that I was really ignorant as to what had taken place in respect to the union, and the terms of it; and as such you appeared to come to us; but when the union was discovered and the Constitution, this altered the case to me. But you say you are the same thing still. Sir, did you not approve of the Constitution, bring copies of it up, and spread them among the people? Did you not defend it and plead for it, and against those that withstood it, and say positively you meant to support it, until you found you could not get the people reconciled to it? Now, however, you say it is a dead thing to you fifteen months since. Yet it is the standing Constitution of that church of which you are a member. Your saying it has been dead to you these fifteen months, is the same as to say it was alive to you before—and yet there is no alteration in you—strange!

"You say that the Constitution never had any influence in producing any alteration either in doctrine, worship or order. If this is the case, pray what is the necessity of it? Has it not then done much mischief needlessly? Have not your former brethren, then, good reason to charge you and

your present connections with as hard things for breach of charity as you have done me? For my part, I must freely confess to you, that I think it is hard and strange dealing for you to leave your brethren standing on the same ground that you and they formerly stood upon, and join in a new Constitution, and thereby so detach your religious profession and principles from them and other bodies of Presbyterians, as that neither Burgher nor Anti-Burgher is to be received or acknowledged by you, without they first acknowledge the Constitution and approve of it, and profess their adherence to it: and yet you assert there is no change in you, and that it has no influence on the doctrine, worship or order. Dare you say that that there is no difference between the ordination vows you came under framed by the Seceders, and those in the new Constitution? Could you reconcile conduct like this with the application of that scripture you mention? (1 Cor. 2.)

"Now, sir, from these things I have mentioned, I think it is evident that you do dissemble, and those that see and know and go along with you, cannot easily clear themselves of the charge of dissimulation. Though I could not charge you with plain error, neither could Paul charge Peter, (Gal. ii.) yet I hope I shall stand justified with the Apostle Paul, if I go not with dissemblers, but withstand them to the face; for as holding an error is a sin—so is holding the truth in unrighteousness and dissembling in our profession; it has also a sad influence in drawing others off their feet. This, therefore, I offer to you and my brethren as a plain scripture reason for my not joining with you. (Gal. ii. 11–15, and Psalm xxvi. 4.) As to your posing my conscience, I own freely, that, although I might have somewhat to offer to man for the vindication of my conduct, that it becomes me to plead guilty before God; for sure I am that the best of my services have in them what would condemn me were I to answer for myself. I can assure you, sir, it has been a matter of grief to me, that things have come to such a state as, that, from a sense of duty, I have been obliged to steer a different course from many of my brethren, whom I much respect.

"You ask, Does it offend me, that you have sometimes preached the necessity of peace and brotherly love? I answer, no. I think it a minister's duty to do so, if he does it in season; but it offends me, that, when you steer so many different courses, you preach peace in every one of them, both when you were in connection with your former brethren, and adhering to the Testimony and Covenants; and also, when you left them and made the new Constitution your standard.

You have also preached peace these fifteen months, since it has become dead to you. Surely you were wrong before, or you are wrong now.

"A minister may be very unfaithful and still preach truth. I remember Mr. Clark was much blamed by many good whigs, for his unfaithfulness, nay, some thought it was traitorous, when he preached in the Scots Patent, [Argyle] when Burgoyne was coming down, upon that passage—'Agree with thine adversary quickly, while he is in the way.' Yet I never heard that they charged him with an error.

"Mr. Livingston has this note in one of his sermons: 'There are times and seasons, when a man's silence will bring a curse upon his head, and speaking of sicker men waving, aye the controversy of the day, who, when prelacy is the controversy, will preach against Popery, and when Popery is the controversy, will preach good moral doctrine, love to God and to our neighbor,' he says, 'how will such a one look for a blythe sight of Christ on a death-bed?'

"As to what you observe from that sensible author, if you have observed him carefully through, you must be conscious to yourself that the citation from him does not answer your purpose. That author, in page 29 of that book, says: 'Four things concur in fixing the articles of communion in a church, viz: the sanction of truth, peace, holiness and order—unanimity must be insisted on as an essential circumstance, because, a dissenting voice throws all in confusion. (p. 37.) The manner of forming a church connection is by an express, or at least an implied covenant. Mutual agreement must be the ground of fellowship in a church state, for how shall two walk together except they be agreed? And how shall they know that they are agreed unless their agreement be some way expressed in a manner that may remove just cause of suspicion?'

"Now, sir, I humbly ask, is your church thus formed, when the Constitution upon which it stands is a dead thing to you? Sir, I hope by this time you and my brethren see me plainly and know my mind, and that you may know whether it is necessary to lay me under the lesser excommunication or not. Pray, sir, lay these lines before my former brethren of the session, and let them know from me, that I am obliged to disclaim their authority and all connection with them in a church state, until they make it evident where they are or what they are,; whether they adhere to the Constitution of the Secession Testimony, or the new one? Or if both are dead to you, whether you are on the Congregational plan? For my own

part, I must own, I am at a greater loss to know what you are as a church, than any denomination of professed Presbyterians that I know of.

"Wishing that truth and peace may flourish, and that the friends of Zion may, in God's good time, see eye to eye; that they may all speak the same things, having the same spirit that dwells in Christ, dwelling in them, influencing them thereunto, is the desire of him who is,

"Reverend and dear sir,

"Your humble servant,

"JOHN HARSHA."*

Mr. Annan, who had exerted himself more than any other individual to effect the union, continued restless and changeable till the last. Soon becoming weary of Wallkill, he removed to Boston; the principal reason assigned for which, was, that "he might give his sons that collegiate education to which they were entitled from their *birth and baptism*."† Not succeeding according to his expectations in gathering a congregation in Boston, he next turned his thoughts towards Philadelphia, and after a long contest for Mr. Marshall's meeting-house in Spruce-street, by means of a few advocates of the union in the congregation, he succeeded in ousting Mr. Marshall, and settled for some time there. But the want of success in gathering a large congregation still seeming to attend him, he left Philadelphia the year before Mr. Marshall's decease. He died in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania—his death was sudden; being thrown out of his gig, he was killed by the fall.

Mr. Mason continued in the Associate Reformed Church while he lived. He was succeeded in his charge in the city of New-York by his son, the late Dr. Mason, known for his advocacy of latitudinarian principles, and as the "*leader*" who dispersed and scattered the Associate Reformed Church.

Mr. Murray, whose faculties were much impaired at the time of the union by a general paralysis of the body, died soon afterwards, leaving a son and a daughter, both of whom became members of the Associate Church and died in her communion. His son, the late George Murray, of Washington county, Pa., was an active and influential member of the Session of the Associate congregation of Chartiers, and at the time of his decease, in 1832, was treasurer of the Theological Seminary at Canonsburgh.

Mr. Smith, who for some time vacillated between union

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* Appendix G. † Ruling Elder, page 85.

and no union, but who was at last particularly active in bringing it about, especially by persuading Messrs. Murray and Proudfit to favor it, soon afterwards abandoned it, made acknowledgement of his sin and sorrow for having left his profession, and was restored by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.* But he was afterwards left to give lamentable evidence that the good of souls, and the honor of Christ, were not the great objects of his pursuit. He was deposed from the office of the ministry and the communion of the church, for immorality of practice. He lived in poverty and obscurity for many years, near Canonsburgh, Pa., where he died a few years since. Towards the close of his life he gave some tolerable evidence that he had seen his sin and repented of it. The manner of his death was sufficiently singular to be recorded in this notice.

He attended the funeral of an old acquaintance and neighbor; after the interment, he returned with the family to the house of the deceased, and, several other friends being present, he delivered a very solemn and pertinent address, remained over night, and next morning having taken his seat at the breakfast table, he asked a blessing, and reclining his head backwards, immediately expired, without a struggle or groan.

Mr. Logan, although he voted for the union, and never returned to the fellowship of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, yet never appeared to be satisfied with it, or to approve of the course pursued by the new body. In 1789, he withdrew from the Associate Reformed Synod. He continued to teach and vindicate the doctrines which distinguished the profession of the Associate Church, and continued to testify against those things which he considered in the union church as a defection from the profession. In 1806, a short time before his death, he wrote a very particular Testimony against the views of the Associate Reformed Synod on the subject of public covenanting, as expressed in their minutes of 1802, at New-York. In the same paper, which he intended to be communicated to that Synod, he bears a very explicit testimony in favor of the doctrine of the Associate Church on that subject.†

The Rev. Matthew Henderson was not present at the closing of the union, but under a belief that in the profession of

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* See Appendix H.

† See Alexander and Rufus, p. 319–321, where Dr. Anderson gives Mr. Logan the character of a pious minister and an excellent man.

the new society, would be fully maintained the principles of the Associate Church, he at first acceded to the union. He continued, while he had any hopes of seeing the principles which he professed asserted and maintained, but when he lost hopes of this, he returned to the Associate Presbytery, acknowledged his sin in acceding to the union, professed his sorrow for it, and was received again into fellowship. Mr. Henderson was then an aged and infirm man. He was the first minister of the Associate Church, who was settled west of the Alleghany Mountains. In vindicating Mr. Henderson from an attack made upon him by Mr. Annan in his "Ruling Elder," Mr. Marshall bears testimony to his services. "It might have been expected," says he, "that Mr. Henderson's gray hairs in the service of Christ, his usefulness in the ministry, and his weakly and infirm state health, would have gained better treatment than Mr. Annan has given him."*

Mr. Henderson was settled over the Associate congregation of Chartiers, near Canonsburgh, in Pennsylvania. He came to his death in the following manner:—Some of his family having found a bee tree on the farm, and as is usual in such cases, were engaged in cutting it down; it was in the night, and Mr. Henderson coming within the reach of the tree, at the instant it was falling, was killed by it. He left a numerous family. One of his sons, who was admitted to the ministry during the time his father was in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod, remained in the same connection; another son, (Ebenezer) was minister in the Associate Church, and settled first as pastor of the united congregations of Pittsburgh and Peter's Creek, and was afterwards transferred to Philadelphia. Mr. Henderson left other sons and daughters, all of whom that now survive, are respectable members of the Associate Church.

Dr. Clark, who, as has been already noticed, removed from the State of New-York before the union was closed, or the Associate Reformed Synod constituted, acceded to the union, but it is not known whether he ever attended the judicatories of that church or not; but I have been informed by several members of Dr. Clark's congregation at Long Cane, S. C., and particularly by Mr. James Thompson, who was an elder in that congregation during the whole time Dr. Clark was pastor of it, that it never was generally known in the congregation, until after Mr. Clark's decease, that the Associate Reformed Church had in any respect departed from the

* Marshall's Vindication, page 89.

standards of the Associate Church. The belief that prevailed there was, that the Reformed Presbytery had acceded to, and adopted all the standards of that church. He died in his study, sitting on his chair, Dec. 25, 1793.

Mr. Miller, the elder, from Octorara, who voted for the union, also returned and submitted himself to the Associate Presbytery.*

Thus, with the exception of Mr. Proudfit, and perhaps we might say Mr. Murray, no other member of the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, continued to approve of the union or remain in it. And it was not till most of the original members that closed the union, on both sides, had either left it or were dead, and new members arisen, that they could agree about a full public statement of their principles. In 1783 they published a very brief sketch of a Constitution, which they altered and amended in 1790; but it was not until 1799, at Green Castle, that their present Constitution and standards were agreed upon.

I shall close this chapter with the following quotation from Mr. McCulloch's Life of Mr. Marshall. Mr. McCulloch lived through these times, and had himself seen and heard the scenes which he described.

"It may further be observed respecting the union, that it was not a healing of divisions in the church but an increasing of them; for the Associate and Reformed Churches still exist in America; and a new denomination is sprung up, formerly unknown. This was foretold by Mr. Marshall. In a conversation with Mr. Mason of New-York, he said: 'Suppose all the *ministers* were to join in this union. a number of the people of both sides would not. They will get ministers for themselves; and so there will be a new division in the church.'

"The evening after this breach took place in the Associate Presbytery, Mr. Marshall, in a conversation with Mr. John Smith, said, that it would be advisable, if neither party should inflict any censures on the other; which would leave the way clear for a re-union, if it should be found that those who formed the union were still maintaining their former principles."†

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* Marshall's Life, page 21. † Ibid. pages 21, 22.

CHAPTER IV.

Proposal for re-union—Mr. Annan's Ruling Elder—Low state of the Presbytery—Application to the Synod in Scotland for more help—Arrival of Mr. Anderson—Of Mr. Beveridge—Narrative and Testimony—Unanimity of the Members—Revival of the Secession cause in the State of New-York—Return of Mr. Henderson—Extension of the Presbytery—The Secession cause spreads in western Pennsylvania—In Vermont—In Kentucky—In Tennessee—In the Carolinas and Virginia—The appointment of a Professor—The first student licensed—Public Covenanting in New-York—Act on Covenanting—On occasional communion—The Synod constituted—Reflections.

In our last chapter we gave a detailed account of the union, from which sprung the Associate Reformed Synod. It is not our intention, here, to trace further the history of that body; though we may have occasion to refer to some of its proceedings. The following note from the last edition of the Declaration and Testimony, shows that the Associate Synod consider all the reasons which ever existed for not concurring in that union, as not in the least removed by the subsequent history of their Associate Reformed Brethren.

"Nearly fifty years have now elapsed since the organization of the Associate Reformed Church; and the correctness of the above remarks on her Constitution, has been clearly exhibited. For some time she continued to observe the usages of the Associate Church, from which she separated. But becoming numerous and popular, some of her ministers began to manifest symptoms of dissatisfaction with many of these usages, acted contrary to them, wrote against them, and attempted their abolition. The observance of fast, and preaching days, in connection with the administration of the Lord's Supper, close communion, and the exclusive use of the Scripture Psalms, seem to have been greatly obnoxious to her leading men. Many imbibed the sentiments and imitated the practices of these innovations, while others tenaciously adhered to the old way. This diversity of sentiment agitated for years her ecclesiastical assemblies, extended also to her congregations and produced in both much discussion. This excitement was increased by permission to introduce the Dutch Psalms, and by repeated attempts to form a union with the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed Churches. Almost every year, some new project was brought forward and discussed,

till at last instead of uniting with other societies, and diminishing the number of seperate contending denominations, she was herself broken into fragments. One fragment was formed into the *Associate Reformed* Synod of the South, another into the *Associate Reformed* Synod of the West; and a third into the *Associate Reformed* Synod of the North. The latter formed the main body of the church, and was in possession of her funds and property. These by a late union, formed by a majority of her delegates, representing, however, a minority of the church, have been transferred to the General Assembly. Thus has the history of the Associate Reformed church, been marked with unsteadfastness and declension. She has still no testimony against prevailing evils. The principles of the Secession, abandoned in the original act of union, have never yet been recognized; and it is a lamentable fact, that, some of her ministers make use of human composition instead of scripture Psalmody—invite all in good standing in other societies, to a seat at the Lord's table, and accept of the same invitation from others. They exchange ministerial services with ministers in other societies—assisting and receiving assistance, in dispensing sealing ordinances, and in the ordination of ministers; and are still tolerated in so doing. If we had good reason for not joining in the union which produced this church; the course pursued by her for nearly half a century, renders still stronger our obligations to remain seperate from her."*

It may be proper to mention, before dismissing the subject of the union, that in 1785 a letter was received by the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, from a committee of the Associate Reformed Synod, proposing to take measures towards forming a union between the bodies as they then existed. This proposal was made, at a time, when several of the ministers of the Synod, and particularly Mr. Robert Annan, was aiding those who were endeavoring to deprive Mr. Marshall of his meeting-house. The plan suggested did not, in the judgment of the Presbytery, hold out a prospect of much good. The Presbytery, however, returned an answer according to their views of the letter, and with that the correspondence dropped.†

Mr. Annan's pamphlet, entitled "*The Ruling Elder*," soon appeared, which gave so distorted an account of the union and false coloring to the whole transaction, as removed still farther any prospect of a union between the parties. The affair of the Spruce-street Meeting-house, in Philadelphia, and

* Narrative, page 57, Ed. 1828. † See Appendix I.

the course pursued by Mr. Annan, in relation to it, also tended not a little to widen the breach, and alienate fraternal feelings.

By the union, the cause of the Associate Church in this country seemed to be brought low indeed. Only two ministers were left—congregations were much divided and distracted,—a violent and untiring opposition from those who had abandoned that cause was kept up against it. And it did not at first appear how far the people would be carried away by the defection.

The Presbytery sent, as soon as practicable, an account of their proceedings and situation to the Synod in Scotland, and also a petition for more help. The Synod unanimously and fully approving of the course pursued by Messrs. Marshall and Clarkson, as appears from their act, as given above in Chapter Third, resolved to send them help without delay. The late Dr. Anderson, who was at that time a licentiate, but on account of the difficulty with which he was heard, had ceased to take appointments to preach, was first sent over. He arrived in the autumn of 1783, and Mr. Beveridge, then assisting Mr. Gib in Edinburgh, was immediately put on trial for ordination, with the view of being sent also to America. He was ordained on the 23d of September, 1783, and arrived in this country early in the spring of 1784. This was nearly two years after the union; and so discouraging did the outward prospects of the Presbytery appear even then, that Mr. Marshall, in a letter written near that time, expressed fears about finding places sufficient to employ and support the two. His fears were, however, soon happily dispelled.

The subordinate standards of the Associate Church had not as yet been republished in America. The members who came from Great Britain and Ireland, generally, had brought with them their Confessions of Faith, and the Judicial Testimony of the Associate Presbytery, afterwards the Associate Synod of Scotland. But these books, and particularly the latter, were not easily to be obtained here. And many were now attending on the ministry of the members of Presbytery, who had not had the opportunity of previous acquaintance with the peculiar standards of the Associate Church; and young persons were growing up, who needed to be more particularly instructed in their professed principles. Besides, in this country, errors both in practice and doctrine were prevailing, which were unknown in Scotland, when the Judicial Testimony was enacted. On these accounts, not merely a new edition of the Testimony, but a new statement of the

distinguishing principles of the Associate Church, was deemed necessary. A measure of this kind had been proposed and agreed to in 1776, but the unsettled state of the Presbytery, during all the time the union was under discussion, together with the indifference of some of the members, and the opposition of others, prevented the execution of the design. The necessity of it was now still increasing, from the distorted and unfair accounts that were given of the principles of the Presbytery by their opponents, and particularly by those who had formerly belonged to the Presbytery.

Accordingly, at the meeting of Presbytery in Philadelphia, May 4th, 1784, it was resolved to draw up "A Testimony for the doctrine and order of the church of Christ," and Mr. Beveridge, though but recently arrived in this country, was appointed to the service.* He applied himself with so much diligence to the work, that the Declaration and Testimony was completed in time to be approved and adopted by Presbytery, at a meeting held at Pequa, August 25th, and the Narrative on the 25th of October the same year.

The Narrative contains a succinct history of the church from the Reformation from Popish darkness, 1560, until the time of its publication, which has since been brought down till 1828, the date of the last edition. The Testimony contains a statement of the doctrines held by the Associate Church, and a condemnation of the opposite errors. The Narrative and Testimony were published together, in the course of the same year. And as the Presbytery wished still to preserve and cherish the unity, which had hitherto subsisted between the churches in the two countries, copies of the Testimony were transmitted to Scotland, and laid before the Synod for inspection at its ensuing meeting, which was in April, 1785, and although no judgment was expressed concerning it at that meeting, and owing to the scarcity of copies, but few members had an opportunity of examining it before their next meeting, which was in August following; yet the Synod then agreed to represent, for the encouragement of the Presbytery, "that such of their members as had examined them, were of opinion, that the Narrative and Testimony, which had been published by the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, may be of singular use for supporting the truths of the gospel and the Reformation cause, against the errors and corruptions prevailing in that country."† This book has since

* The Narrative and Testimony were prepared by Mr. Beveridge, chiefly at the house of Mr. James Fulton, Oxford, Chester county, Pa.

† See act of the Synod concerning the Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

gone through five editions, and continues to exhibit a display of the religious principles held by the Associate Synod of North America.*

The preparation and emission of the Testimony had the most happy effect in bringing the brethren of the Presbytery to the most intimate acquaintance with one another's views, on every part of their public profession. Hereby it appeared that they "thought the same things, spoke the same things, and walked by the same rule, and were perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment." The fruit of this was much outward prosperity and great internal peace and comfort among the members. They had had a season of sorrow in sowing their seed, but in harvest they had a rejoicing time. Before the union, evidences were too frequently occurring, of a want of unanimity on some point or other of their public profession—and a want of confidence was the consequence. But now they could walk together, knowing they were agreed.

It should be remembered as a kind Providence, that when the Associate Church in this country was called to make a statement of her distinguishing principles, her ministers were few in number, they were most cordially united in sentiment, they were men of intelligence and sound judgment, their after lives showed that their piety was genuine, and that they had no end in view, but the promotion of truth and the advancement of the true interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.

In the Testimony, too, their principles were distinctly defined. Those who joined them, could do it understandingly. The knowledge of their principles became more widely diffused, and the consequence was, large accessions were made to their number in different places; and frequent applications

* The following anecdote connected with this subject, related to me a short time since by an esteemed brother of the Stamford Presbytery, shows what the circulation of a book may sometimes do:—Some families, originally from Ireland, having settled in Upper Canada, desired a visit and sermon from one of the ministers of that Presbytery, by whom they were accordingly visited. On being informed that the Presbytery of Stamford belonged, or was subordinate to the Associate Synod of North America, they remarked that they had not heard of that Synod, but that they had heard of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and had seen their Testimony. That through their minister in Ireland, they had got a reading of that Testimony, and approved of its principles—and that they would have wished to connect themselves with that Presbytery, but knowing Pennsylvania was so far from them, they supposed it impracticable. Their surprise and satisfaction may be readily imagined, when they were informed that the Presbytery to which they had now applied, was actually a constituent part of that body, formerly known as the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, now raised to the rank of a Synod, consisting of fifteen Presbyteries, and holding the identical Testimony of which they had been speaking.—Thus Providence had led them, by a way they knew not, to make application to the very body with which they desired to be connected.

to Presbytery for divine ordinances, from new and distant places; and in most places where ordinances were enjoyed, more than usual evidences of the divine presence and blessing seemed to attend their dispensation.

But amidst these tokens of prosperity, the Presbytery and the people had enough to remind them that the church was still in her militant state. They were still meeting with much opposition from their former brethren. In trials of this kind, Mr. Marshall and his congregation participated largely. He was first violently kept out of his pulpit on the Sabbath day. And after a long and vexatious law-suit, was finally ejected from his meeting-house.*

By this time, the principles and design of the new society began to be better known, and notwithstanding the declaration often made, that no change or departure from the principles professed by the Associate Church was intended, or had been made, yet the people now began to think that these principles had been abandoned, and that others wholly incompatible with them had been introduced in their stead, and the consequence was, that numerous applications were made to Presbytery for a supply of preaching and other ordinances from different places. Before this, the applications to the Presbytery were confined to those places in the eastern counties of Pennsylvania, where the Prnsbytery had generally met when the union was under discussion, and where, consequently, the true state of the questions involved in the union were better and more fully understood. In more distant places, many were induced to believe there had been no departure from the profession of the Associate Church by the new society. And although the circumstances of the country, particularly the mode of communicating intelligence, were very different fifty years ago from what they are now, yet it is not to be concealed that the ministers who had gone into the union, in many instances, used what influence they could, to prevent the people from learning the true principles upon which the union was formed. The late Mr. John Harsha, of Argyle, in his letter to Mr. Proudfit, expressly gives this as the reason why he concurred in the call for him. His words are: "I then thought you stood on the footing of the Secession Testimony, *and really was ignorant of what had taken place as to the union and the terms of it;* and as such, [standing on the footing of the Secession Testimony,] you appeared to come to us. But when the union was discovered, and the new Constitu-

* Appendix J.

tion, this altered the case to me." Even after the Constitution was published, it was in some places not allowed to circulate among the people. A member of Dr. Clark's congregation in South Carolina, writing to his friend in New-York, remarks, "It was like a chance that happened, that ever I got a reading of the Constitution." It need not now be thought strange, that under such circumstances, information respecting the union would spread but slowly. Even in New-York, it was long before a correct account was obtained. Hence the rapid increase of the Associate Reformed body at the first.

When the Associate Presbytery of New-York, at Salem, (then called New Perth,) in 1780, agreed to the terms of union with the Reformed Presbytery, proposed at Pequa, June 9th, 1779,* many were much dissatisfied, but owing to the circumstance of their not being members of the court, had not then an opportunity of making any public opposition to the deed of Presbytery. It was, however, warmly opposed in Presbytery, by Mr. John Foster, a ruling elder from the Congregation of Salem; and although he was alone in the Presbytery, all the ministerial members being opposed to him, yet he stood firmly. Mr. Foster had uniformly taken a deep interest in every thing that affected the purity and prosperity of the church. He well understood, and was warmly attached to the order and doctrines of the Reformation Churches, as exhibited in the standards of the Associate Church. He considered the terms of union as departing from his former profession. Many of the people were with him in sentiment, but for want of full information, they knew not what to do. It was known that overtures for a union were on foot, between the Presbytery of Pennsylvania and the Reformed Presbytery. It was reported that all the Presbytery of Pennsylvania were in favor of it, and had or would join in it. There were then no Periodicals for the circulation of religious intelligence among the people; rumor often spread false reports, and it would be long before they could be corrected. Under such circumstances, it is not a matter of surprise, that the people should be disheartened. Many of them were conscientiously attached to their profession; and they were apprehensive that their teachers had abandoned the distinguishing principles of that profession.—Promises, indeed, of a Testimony, in which all the principles of the Secession Church in Scotland should be fully retained, were held out to

* See Chap. III.

them. But the Testimony ended in promises. Much anxiety began to be felt among the people about their situation. It was not until the summer of 1784, that they learned that there was help for them in America. The manner of the revival of the Secession cause in the State of New-York, was as follows:

In the beginning of the summer of 1784, a Mrs. Hinsdale, residing in Cambridge, being providentially called to Philadelphia, Mr. John Foster embraced the opportunity of sending by her a letter to Mr. Marshall, informing him of the circumstances of the friends of the Secession cause in the State of New-York, and asking him for information respecting the Presbytery of Pennsylvania. Mr. Marshall's answer, although it shows the discouraging view which he took of the affairs and prospects of the Presbytery, was "like good news from a far country" to Mr. Foster and his friends. They were greatly encouraged to find that any were remaining faithful to their religious profession in America. Although an extract would answer the immediate purpose for which it is introduced, yet, as it was written at so critical and important a period of the Associate Church in this country, it may be proper to insert the whole letter. The reference to the late Dr. Anderson as the *probationer*, and Mr. Beveridge as the *actual member*, will be read with curiosity and interest by many, who know the important places which these men, under Divine Providence, have filled in the Secession Church in America. The letter is as follows:

"Dear Sir,

"Yours, by Mrs. Hunsden, [Hinsdale,] I received last week. God has been trying our faithfulness for him in a witnessing way. A plausible scheme of union with the Covenanters, whose zeal for truth has been so much celebrated, is made the pretext for burying our Testimony, for attained to reformation, and also for burying all that reformation which the Secession had been honored to arrive at about the purity of doctrine, the nature of subjection to civil rulers, and the nature of Covenanting. And all that the new Constitution has left is a gingle of words about the spirit of former Testimonies. A wide door is opened for promiscuous communion, eversive of any proper Testimony for the Mediator's glory. For these things, we have been under the necessity of separating from our former brethren, who have broken through the bonds of our union, on the footing of a witnessing profession, and their own vows in swearing the Covenants, and at their ordination. Whether they will ever return to their

former profession, the Lord only knows; but at present they are destroying that faith they once built up. But God's eyes are ever on the truth, and will not leave himself without a witness. But these *divisions of Reuben should occasion great searchings of heart.*

"There is an answer to the new Constitution in the press, which will speedily be published, written by one of our young brethren.

" Our Presbytery is about publishing a Testimony for truth, pointed against the errors and evils which prevail in the land. I expect it will be finished and adopted at our next meeting, which is to be August 24th, at Pequa. It consists of an Introtroduction and the Testimony itself. The Introduction gives an historical account of the rise and progress of the cause of the Reformation and all the contendings for it, to the rupture in our Presbytery. The Testimony is a plain explicit declaration of the truth in point of doctrine, worship, discipline and government, which has always been received in the Secession Church, with a condemnatory clause in every article, pointed against the errors which take place in this land.

" Last fall a probationer arrived from Scotland for our help, who is pious, learned and sensible, but of a weak voice.

" This spring, the Synod has sent us an actual member, possessed of every gracious and acquired qualification suited to this country. The week before last, a young man arrived, who is just gone through his studies in Philosophy and Divinity, and is warmly recommended to us as a proper person to be taken immediately on trial for license; but, indeed, we have not places sufficient to employ and support the two we have already, without further applications. However, there are appearances in several places for applications for sermon in a witnessing way. Should any number of people with you, in any way able to assist in defraying traveling expenses, regularly apply, they may expect to have it. And I think, some of us will, at any rate, be sent to New-York this fall.

" I have sent you one of my Catechisms, and if you could sell any of them, send to me for them, for I am likely to be a loser by the expense of printing. Also, I have sent you Mr. Ramsey's Relief Scheme Considered. The writer is one of our ministers in Glasgow, and his reasoning equally concludes against the new Constitution.

"Shortly, I expect a number of books here from Scotland, new publications, and all concerning our principles, which will be sold low. I wish some of them were in your settle-

ment. Among which are Mr. Gib's Present Truth, 2 vols.; Mr. William Mair's Lectures; Mr. Turnbull on the Anti-Government Scheme; Mr. Ramsey's Sermon on Covenanting; Mr. Anderson's Essays, &c.

"I think the friends of Christ with you, should form themselves into a praying society. That you should be much employed in representing the cause of God at his throne—that you should be steady, pointed, and consistent in your profession. "Hold fast what thou hast, let no man take thy crown." If you take regular steps, waiting on the Lord in the way of his word, I hope he will relieve you.

"The scheme has been long and deeply laid, to bury the Testimony for Jesus in this land. The foundation has been long since dug, and now the superstructure is raised. I am very sorry that Mr. Proudfit is carried away with the delusion: he was steady in his opposition to Mr. Rodger's scheme, who is now in their communion. I have a letter lately from one in his bounds, which informs me he still teaches the same doctrine for which he was deposed. Sometimes I think Divine Providence has a mind to scourge Mr. Proudfit back to his duty. "All flesh is grass." I shall be glad to hear often from you. I am, dear sir, with best wishes for your spiritual welfare,

"Yours sincerely,
"WILLIAM MARSHALL.

"Philadelphia, July 15th, 1784."

The information contained in this letter was very refreshing to the people in that part of the State of New-York. Alluding to this letter, Mr. Foster, in writing to a friend, says, "that it was a refreshing letter, although there were many mournful things in it; yet it was refreshing to find that Mr. Marshall, and his brother, Mr. Clarkson, by the good hand of God upon them, had been helped to make a stand."*

A petition was immediately drawn up and signed by a large number of very respectable people, both men and women, "praying the Associate Presbytery to send one of their number to dispense divine ordinances among them, *according to the received principles of said Presbytery.*" Among the signers of this petition, the following names are still recollected, viz: John Foster, James Small, William Reid,†

* See Appendix K.

† The late William Reid, Esq., of Argyle, N. Y., was the last survivor of this list. He died November 19th, 1833, at the advanced age of ninety-six years and nearly seven months. He was a man of sound discriminating judgment, and re-

William Blake, John McNight, Mr. Livingston, Mrs. Livingston, Mrs. Fotheringham, Mrs. McKie, Mrs. Hinsdale, &c. The descendants of many of whom are still to be "found walking in the truth," among the most reputable and consistent members of the Associate Church, not only in the congregations in the State of New-York, but in many other places.

This petition was received by the Presbytery, August 25th, 1784, at the same meeting at which the Testimony was adopted. And as soon as the circumstances of the Presbytery would permit, which was not, however, until their meeting in October following, when the Narrative was adopted, Mr. Beveridge was sent, in compliance with the prayer of the petitioners. He remained all the winter of 1784–5, laboring with distinguished success in that part of the State of New-York; "During which time the hearts of the people became knit to him, as their minister," and many were added to the church during this visit. These people afterwards took the regular steps to have Mr. Beveridge settled among them as their stated pastor, where he was accordingly settled in 1789.

In the city of New-York, those who still remained attached to the principles of the Associate Church, seeing that there was now a prospect of maintaining these principles, also made application; and on Mr. Beveridge's return from Cambridge, in the spring of 1785, he also organized a congregation in that city.*

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tained all his mental faculties unimpaired to the very last of his long life. His reading was extensive and general, and his memory singularly retentive; his habits of observation were close and accurate, whether it had reference to men or things. In the accuracy and extent of his Theological knowledge, he was surpassed by few men in any station of life. He was also minutely acquainted with the rules and principles of Presbyterian discipline and order, on which account he was particularly useful as a member of church courts. His practical piety, through his whole life, harmonized with his religious knowledge. His death, which seemed to be merely the effect of old age, took place during a meeting of the Presbytery of Cambridge, in Argyle, at which meeting the attention of the Presbytery was occupied an unusual length of time, with some very troublesome and painful business; the case was well understood by him. And each day he particularly enquired as to the progress the Presbytery was making. And the remarks made by him then, have been fully confirmed by the events since. The last time he was audibly engaged in prayer, which was but a very short time before he departed, he distinctly alluded to the particular trials, which that Presbytery was then meeting with, in holding fast the principles of their profession. The causes which were then disturbing the peace of the church in that section, after five years longer operation, have come to the issue, which he had long before predicted they necessarily must do, if the purity or peace of the church would be maintained. But before the Presbytery rose, he had entered into his eternal rest.

* Appendix L.

Thus the prospects of the Presbytery began again to revive in the State of New-York, in those very places where both friends and enemies had considered the cause wholly prostrated. The people in these congregations were numerous, considering the circumstances of their situation, and were highly respectable. They now gave evidence that it was to the principles and practices of their profession, that they were attached, and that their attachment was conscientious, for they were ready to suffer, as they all did more or less, reproach and other inconvenience, on account of their profession.

While the cause of the Presbytery was thus advancing towards the north and the east, it was progressing with accelerated steps towards the west. A strong current of emigration had already set in from the eastern to the western parts of Pennsylvania. Many who understood, and were attached to the principles of the Associate Church, were among the emigrants. These carried their profession with them, and wherever they settled, they generally formed the beginning of a congregation. Hence congregations very rapidly multiplied in the western parts of Pennsylvania. But owing to the same cause, it will readily be perceived, the congregations in the eastern parts, especially such as were destitute of the stated dispensation of ordinances declined; and indeed, some eventually became extinct, particularly in Lancaster and Chester counties. The result, however, was a great enlargement of the Presbytery's boundaries and influence.

The Synod in Scotland continued to send over help to the Presbytery from time to time, as the necessities of the church seemed to demand. Mr. Beveridge was followed by Messrs. David Goodwillie and Archibald Whyte. The Presbytery was also receiving additional strength from the return of some of their former brethren. Mr. John Smith, who, as has already been mentioned, took so active a part in the Presbytery of Pennsylvania in bringing about the union, returned: so also did Mr. M. Henderson. Each of them acknowledged their sin in agreeing to the union, and submitted themselves to the Presbytery.* Mr. Henderson's return, which took place in in 1789, gave much satisfaction to the Presbytery. He had uniformly sustained the character of an upright, pious man.

* In a report on the subject of Psalmondy, by Dr. McCarroll, adopted by the Associate Reformed Synod in 1838, Mr. Smith is called one of the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church.

He was the first minister of the Associate Church settled west of the Alleghany Mountains, where he was settled a number of years previous to the union of 1782. The proceedings of the Presbytery concerning his restoration to his former standing, belonging properly to the history of the Associate Church in this country, and particularly her spread in the west, ought, on this account, to be inserted here. But there is another reason for their insertion; they show the faithfulness of the court, and thus furnish a salutary example to church courts in similar cases; and they furnish an honorable testimony to the candor and sincerity of Mr. Henderson himself.

"*Proceedings of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania concerning the receiving of the Rev.* MATTHEW HENDERSON, minister of the gospel at Chartiers, into ministerial and christian communion with them. To which are added two letters, one to Mr. Henderson and one to the people of Chartiers.

"In the church of the Associate congregation at New-York, October 19th, 1789: At which time and place the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania being met, and constituted with prayer by the Moderator, the Rev. Mr. Thomas Beveridge; sederunt, the Rev. Messrs. William Marshall, David Goodwillie, John Anderson and Archibald Whyte, ministers, William Young and George Gosman, elders.

"Mr. Marshall laid before the Presbytery, a petition and representation from the Rev. Matthew Henderson, of Chartiers, in the State of Pennsylvania, in which petition and representation Mr. Henderson confesses his sin in departing from his former profession, and expresses his desire to be humbled before God for it; declaring his approbation of the Testimony maintained by this Presbytery—of the Act of the Associate Synod in Scotland, explaining the connexion between this Presbytery and that Synod; and further, earnestly beseeching this Presbytery to restore him again to our fellowship.

"The Presbytery having entered on the consideration of this petition and representation, after reading sundry other papers transmitted to them by Mr. Henderson, and hearing the mind of members on the subject, adjourned till to-morrow ten o'clock, to meet in this place.

"Closed with prayer.

"October 20th, 1789; in the same place, at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

"The Associate Presbytery being met, constituted with prayer, by the Moderator; sederunt as above. The Presbyte-

ry resumed the consideration of Mr. Henderson's petition and representation, and after further reasoning and deliberation on the subject, a brother was employed in prayer for light and direction from the Lord in this affair. The Moderator then stated the following question: 'Shall Mr. Henderson, in answer to his petition, be received into christian and ministerial communion with this Presbytery?' The roll being called, it was carried unanimously, *receive*. Wherefore, the Presbytery, judging Mr. Henderson's free acknowledgment of the offence he had given, in departing from his former profession; the declaration he has made of his hearty attachment to our received principles, and his earnest desire to be received into the fellowship of this Presbytery, to be sufficient grounds for his admission, did, and hereby do, receive the said Mr. Matthew Henderson into christian and ministerial communion accordingly. His personal absence, owing to his distance from the place of this meeting, to his age, and to his frailty, being no sufficient bar in the way of his admission.

"The Presbytery then agreed to write on this subject to Mr. Henderson, and also to the people in Chartiers, Mingo-Creek and Mill-Creek, who are under the inspection of this Presbytery.

"Closed with prayer.

"Extracted by

"WILLIAM MARSHALL, *Pr. Cl. p. t.*

"To the Rev. Matthew Henderson, minister of the gospel at Chartiers, Washington county, Pennsylvania.

"Rev. dear brother,

"The inclosed minute of this Presbytery will inform you, that the prayer of your petition was unanimously granted by us. We entertained no doubt about your integrity in this matter. It would have been very agreeable to us, if you had been present; but, considering your distance from the place of our meeting, your age and your frailty, we judged your absence not a sufficient cause to hinder you from being, without any further delay, admitted into our fellowship. We shall represent your case to our brethren, the General Associate Synod in Scotland, in such a manner as, we trust, will entirely remove the offence which your conduct in these past years has given to them; and we hope that your conduct, in time to come, will be such as may justify us in doing so. We are all liable, as well as you, to wander out of the straight path, especially in such a cloudy and dark day as this in which we live. We ought to learn from the slipping of our feet, to

take heed unto our way ; to trust less in ourselves and more in Him who keeps Israel.

"It is not altogether unknown to you, that we lie under much reproach, and are exposed to many troubles and temptations. In returning to us, a participation with us in affliction may be expected ; but however unworthy we are, and however much we need chastening, yet as to the hatred of those who rise up against us, and endeavor to suppress the Testimony we maintain, we may, with some confidence, affirm that it is causeless, and will not hurt us. The reproach of Christ is better than the flattery of the world

"You will find it comfortable in the decline of your life, to to be found aiming at faithfulness in the work of your Lord and Master Jesus Christ, whom you have served from your youth. As your ministry was not without acceptance and usefulness, at the time of your entering into the public service of the gospel, we pray God that it may be made more so now, as the evening of your day draws nigh.

"You will see the propriety of intimating to your congregation what has been done by the Presbytery in answer to your petition, and of giving what assistance you can to those in your neighborhood, who are under the inspection of this Presbytery. It was not in our power to afford any of them sermon this winter. We shall do as the Lord gives opportunity afterward.

"Our next Presbyterial meeting is at Philadelphia, April 28th, 1790, and as it is proposed to take into consideration the Overture published by us some years ago, concerning an acknowledgment of sins and engagement to duties ; if it is practicable for you to attend, we hope you will not fail to be there. We published that Overture at a time when the storm blew very hard in our face ; and though many difficulties appear in the way of our proceeding further in that matter, yet we would, in the strength of the Lord, and in obedience of his command, aim at going forward.

"That the Lord and Head of the Church, may enable you and us to act with one heart and soul in his work, is the prayer of your brethren in Christ.

"Signed in our name and by our appointment,

"THOMAS BEVERIDGE, *Moderator.*

"New-York, Oct. 21st, 1789.

"*To the People of Chartiers.*

"Dear Friends,

"Many and various are the devices of Satan for turning us aside from the paths of truth and duty, and the Lord's peo-

ple are in danger of being carred away, in a great measure with them. On which account, so much of the scripture is taken up in warning us to be on our guard against such devices. That the late union which gave rise to the Associate Reformed Synod, was an instance of this kind, cannot be consistently denied by any who are desirous to keep the word of Christ's patience, or who allow that it is our duty as a church, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; that is to contend for it, as the Lord enables us, in all the ways of his appointment, particularly in the way of a steady and consistent adherence to a seasonable Testimony for his despised truths. Schemes of this kind, falling in with the bent of our corrupted nature, are too commonly successful, especially at a time of prevailing deadness and carelessness among church members. Many who had professed adherence to the cause wherein this Presbytery is engaged, were drawn unwarily into an approbation of the union and constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod; thus, in effect, overthrowing what they had formerly been building; and, for several years past, have continued to justify their course of backsliding. However, amidst all the grounds of humiliation with ourselves and our brethren who have left us, it must be acknowledged as matter of thanksgiving, that much of the divine mercy has been manifested. in regard that some have been kept in the hour of temptation; and others have recovered. An instance of the kind last mentioned, is the subject on which we now have the satisfaction to write to you. We have sent you herewith a copy of a minute of this meeting, respecting the case of the *Rev. Mr. Henderson;* by which you will see we have fully received him into Christian and ministerial communion with us. His acknowledgment of his sin in going so far along with some brethren in their backsliding course, his entire approbation of our Declaration and Testimony, and of the Act of the Associate Synod concerning our connection with them; together with the knowledge that some members of Presbytery have of his mind, by conversation with him, leave no room to doubt of his being a hearty friend to the cause and testimony we are endeavoring to maintain. The Presbytery did not deem it necessary to insist on his personal attendance, in order to a compliance with his earnest request to be admitted into our communion, considering his age and his distance from the place of this meeting, considering, also, that if he had been personally present, we could have required no further satisfaction of him than he has given us; and considering that the

state of the Lord's people in your part of the country, required something to be done in his case without delay. Wherefore we earnestly beseech you to receive him as one of us. A due regard to the honor of Christ, to his cause, to our brother himself, to your own souls, rendered it necessary to withdraw from him while he was connected in church communion with those who are opposing the Testimony of Christ, which they formerly espoused. But now, that through divine mercy, he is disentangled from that snare, the same considerations will engage you to give him all encouragement in the Lord's work, particularly by diligent attendance on his ministry and continued prayer. By his restoration, the Lord is anew giving you a pastor, under the banner of a Testimony for truth. As you would desire to improve your privileges, let your love to him and the testimony of Jesus be confirmed. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, *Amen.* Signed in our name and according to our appointment.

"THOMAS BEVERIDGE, *Moderator.*

"New-York, Oct. 21, 1789."

☞ The Letters to the People at Mingo Creek and Mill Creek, are the same as the above, except a small variation in the close, as they could not attend statedly on *Mr. Henderson's* ministry.

Before Mr. Henderson's return several congregations had began to form in what was then Washington county, Pennsylvania, under the care of the Presbytery. To supply these Mr. Anderson and others had been sent out to that section of country, which was then very rapidly filling up with settlers, from the eastern parts of Pennsylvania, and other places; and among others, there was a considerable number, who had already espoused the profession of the Associate Church. Hence in this region the Presbytery found an extensive field, claiming as much of their attention as they could possibly devote to it. Mr. Anderson was sent to these places about the same time, or very shortly after Mr. Beveridge was sent to the state of New-York. At two places, then called Mill Creek and Harman's Creek, Mr. Anderson was called and afterwards settled, about the year 1790. His charge at first extended over a district of country about forty miles in length, and twenty-five or thirty in breadth. The two charges, viz: Mr. Henderson's and Mr. Anderson's, were spread over the whole bounds now occupied by the Presbytery of Chartiers. Thus by the return of Mr. Henderson, and the settlement of Mr. Anderson, the Presbytery's cause seemed to brighten in the western parts of Pennsylvania. Their congrega-

tions rapidly increased in the number of their members. But it has often seemed good to the All-wise and Almighty King of Zion to cast a cloud over the brightest prospects of his church. He sometimes sees fit to remove instruments from stations of great apparent usefulness; and yet show that he can still carry on his own work. Mr. Anderson was soon left alone in this extensive field of labor, by the lamented death of Mr. Henderson; the manner of which is related in the sketch of his life before given. Many, friends as well as foes of the Secession cause, thought its prospects then terminated in the west; Mr. Anderson being generally considered unattractive as a public speaker. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor does he see as man sees. Often those instruments in his work, which are most lightly esteemed by men, he makes most eminently useful. Dr. Anderson lived and labored for more than forty years after this, with great usefulness to the church and advantage to the cause of truth. An individual under the influence of strong prejudice against the Secession cause, had remarked on the occasion of Mr. Henderson's death, and in reference to Mr. Anderson's unpopularity as a speaker; "That the prospects of the Secession cause, were then done, in this country west of the mountains;" yet he lived to see the Associate Synod sitting, when upwards of sixty members were present, in the same congregation, where he thought the cause had received its terminating stroke.

While the influence and cause of the Presbytery were extending westward, they were at the same time progressing northward. Mr. Beveridge's first visit to Cambridge, in the state of New-York, was attended with singular success; and was succeeded as has been noticed by his settlement there in 1789. A society was also formed at Barnet in the state of Vermont, and another at Ryegate, in the same vicinity: where the Rev. David Goodwillie was settled soon afterwards, having at first the oversight of both congregations, and where he continued to labor until his death.

But from Vermont, which has since remained the northern boundary in that direction of the Associate Church, the reader's attention may next be directed to what was then "The Far West," where a door was opened very early for the spread of the gospel, under the banner of the Secession Testimony. Before the Revolutionary war, several families and individuals, who had been connected with the Associate Church, both in Scotland and Ireland, emigrated to what has since become the state of Tennessee. In 1782, the same year in which the union took place, the Presbytery of Penn-

sylvania received petitions praying for a supply of ordinances, from two places in Tennessee ;—the one was from Nashville, and the other from a place near Knoxville, in East Tennessee But the circumstances of the Presbytery, at that time and for a number of years afterwards, rendered it wholly impracticable to send any aid to these people. In both places, however, they continued steadfast and to renew their petitions from time to time, as they thought the hopes of success more encouraging. It was not until after sixteen years perseverence in seeking divine ordinances, administered in a way that they could conscientiously approve, that they received the first ministerial visit. In 1797, when the missionaries sent by the General Associate Synod to the state of Kentucky, arrived in Philadelphia, Mr. Marshall showed them these petitions, and exhorted the brethren to visit them as soon as practicable. He also wrote to the petitioners, informing them of the arrival of the missionaries, and that they were destined for the state of Kentucky ; and that there were prospects that these brethren might be able to give them some supply the ensuing summer. Accordingly about the beginning of May, 1798, only eight weeks after the arrival of the missionaries in the state of Kentucky, a man arrived from Nashville, with a petition for one of them to go there for some short time. In compliance with this petition Mr. Fulton went about the middle of June ; remained at Nashville seven sabbaths, and organized a congregation. This congregation soon afterwards obtained as their stated pastor, Mr. William Hume, another missionary from Scotland. But the evils of slavery becoming more manifest, and the prospect of its speedy removal more hopeless, the principal persons, who had been most active and influential in sustaining the Secession cause so long there, after a few years more of trial, removed to the free states northwest of the Ohio river. (This example, however, had been first set by the brethren in Kentucky.) The minister and most of those who remained, involved themselves in the sin of slavery, and then abandoned their profession, by falling away to another communion.

Before Mr. Fulton returned, a messenger had also arrived with a similar petition from the place near Knoxville. Mr. Armstrong the other missionary accompanied him. In this place Mr. Armstrong found fifty families in one body, attached to the principles of the Associate Church. He also there organized a congregation ; this was in Blount county, East Tennessee. The history of this congregation is probably without a parallel, for consistent stability in holding fast their

profession. Although they repeatedly gave calls to such ministers and probationers as they had an opportunity of hearing, they never obtained a settled pastor, until the 20th of September, 1825, when the late Mr. Carson accepted their call. But three individuals were then living, out of a large number who had signed their first petition forty-three years before. It may, also, be added in relation to this congregation, that they have all along conscientiously complied with the acts of the Associate Synod, on the subject of slavery.

A more particular account of the first visit made to these congregations, by the missionaries just mentioned, will be given afterwards, in the language of the brethren themselves.

For several years prior to 1795, there was a great influx of emigrants to the State of Kentucky, from several countries of Europe, as well as from the older States. And among others, a few families and individuals, in connection with the Associate Church in Scotland, had selected that State for their residence. Some of these had called on Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson, on their way through Pennsylvania, from whom they learned the state of the Presbytery; and by whom they were advised to apply directly to the Synod in Scotland for aid. Mr. James Bain, an active and enterprising man from Scotland, who took a lively interest in every thing that tended to advance true religion, and who resided some time with Mr. Clarkson, before he went to Kentucky, where after his arrival he interested himself much in obtaining a supply of gospel ordinances: he wrote several letters to his friends in Scotland, describing the destitute condition of the country; which were published in the Edinburgh Christian Magazine, and were instrumental in awakening a lively interest among many in Scotland to send them supply. In 1796 the first application from Kentucky was made to the Synod in Scotland for supply. The petition was signed by James Bain, Adam Goodlett, Thomas Robinson and James Pringle. The application was for one minister; supposing that more would not, in the state of the country at that time, find encouragement. The Synod, however, judged differently, and, as the result showed, judged wisely. Two were selected and appointed for that mission. Messrs. Robert Armstrong and Andrew Fulton were both ordained with a view to the mission, and empowered to constitute themselves into a Presbytery, as soon as circumstances would warrant, on their arrival in Kentucky. They arrived in America in the autumn of 1797; and early in the spring of 1798 reached Kentucky, where they were cor-

dially received, and where they found an extended field, with the prospect of a good harvest in great need of laborers.

Particular accounts of the commencement of their labors in Kentucky and also of their first visit to Tennessee, above mentioned, were written by each of the brethren and published in the Edinburgh Christian Magazine. Their accounts, it is believed, will be more interesting to the Christian community than any abstract that could be made from them. Accordingly they shall be here inserted:—

"VERY DEAR SIR,

"You will have heard, I doubt not, long before you receive this, of our arrival in America, and perhaps in Kentucky. The cordial friendship you manifested after we became acquainted, the active part you took in the mission, and the zeal you have otherwise discovered for spreading the gospel, makes it evident that the news of this will afford you gladness of heart, and occasion thanksgiving to the great Head of the Church. Such a long journey over both sea and land, by various means of conveyance, you may easily conceive would subject us to many inconveniences, and to some few hardships. But God, by his kind providence, protected us from the dangers to which we were exposed, carried us through difficulties, and at length brought us in safety to the place of our destination.

"We arrived at New-York upon the 13th of October. Although we thought our passage tedious, we met with nothing distressing. There were some pretty severe gales of wind, but for any thing we know the sailors did not apprehend any danger. The people of New-York in connection with us, showed every mark of kindness and attention to us. There we had the pleasure to see Mr. Marshall, who had been attending the meeting of Presbytery some weeks before, and had not returned to Philadelphia on account of the yellow fever. In company with him we left the city on the 26th, and arrived at Philadelphia the next day. By that time the distemper had greatly abated, and the people were returning. The city is extensive, regular and beautiful; but it appeared then to wear a melancholy gloom. The people were few to appearance, dejected, and somewhat shy to one another. We hear the disease this season has been much worse, and has extended to New-York and other places on the eastern shore. God is punishing the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. In Europe the sword is devouring, and a species of pestilence seems annually to return to America, and to waste some of their most flourishing cities; but the wick-

ed are not repenting of their evil deeds, nor returning to the Lord.

"We were detained in Philadelphia eight or ten days before our books came from New-York. After they arrived, we agreed with a wagoner to take our books to the river Ohio. We went back the country in company with your two nephews, by the way of Lancaster and Carlisle, and came to Pittsburgh on the 19th of November. About half-way from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh we traveled in a stage coach, and afterwards partly on foot. We should have bought horses at Philadelphia. One wagon with five horses carried all our baggage. The wagon was about three weeks in coming to Pittsburgh after we were there; and by the time it came, on account of the frost, it was not reckoned safe to go down the river. We therefore resolved to wait till spring. The frost is much more severe in that country than in Scotland; but last winter, at least, it was not constant. Some time about the new year there came a fresh, which raised the rivers, and carried off the ice. Several boats that were waiting at Pittsburgh and other places went away. Had we got a boat convenient, I believe we would have all attempted to go. Your friends became impatient, and went away in one of the boats. And they only went about an hundred miles down till they were stopped with ice. In company with others, they went down through the wilderness, and so by that means were at Kentucky some weeks before us. The week after we went to Pittsburgh most of our ministers in the back woods came to see us, for it was then thought we would have gone away immediately.

"Mr. Armstrong and I preached in various places of the country round Pittsburgh, and sometimes in the town. As it was winter, the meetings were not large in that country. A great many of the inhabitants here come from Ireland. They seem to be an industrious people, and many of them religious. Pittsburgh stands upon a neck of land between the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, each of which seems to be as large as the Tay. Close below the town these rivers join, and then it is called the Ohio. The situation is beautiful; the town is small, but fast increasing. A great many travelers go that way, and often have to stop for weeks, which makes it expensive for strangers to be long in Pittsburgh. Many of the inhabitants are in a public line of life, and care little about religion. We got acquainted however with some who were very desirous of the gospel, but were much discouraged owing to the smallness of their number. We left Pittsburgh,

I think, upon the 21st of February, and came to Limestone on the 1st of March. The weather, when we were upon the river, was cold and wet, the boat much crowded, and not well fitted off; therefore our passage down the Ohio was not accompanied with all those agreeable sensations which, in other circumstances, might have been expected. We floated at the rate of between three and four miles an hour, and after some time went night and day. About an hundred miles down, the country on each side is partly inhabited, but after that, till we came to Limestone, which is about other four hundred miles, we saw very few houses. We put our baggage into a warehouse at Limestone, and came to Canerun about the middle of March. The distance is about seventy miles. Our friends received us very kindly, and sent a wagon for our books.

"Before we left the back part of Pennsylvania, we were told that there were few religious people in that country; that it was not necessary for us to go down; or if we went down, it would be prudent to leave our articles at Pittsburgh, till we saw the country and the people. Such was the account which some ministers brought up; but we both went, and actually found that only a small number of people openly professed an attachment to religion. For several months we were a little discouraged at the prospect. In this place indeed a considerable number of people attended sermon; but till of late it did not seem probable that a congregation could have been formed here that would have been able to support the gospel. When we came to this State, there was a Mr. Proudfit and a Mr. Steel, both young men, belonging to the Union Synod. It is common in this country for one minister to have two, three, or even four places of worship under his charge, and to preach at each alternately. Eight of these congregations, as they are called, belonging to that body, were not very distant from one another, and some were adjoining to this place. Four of these gave a call to Mr. Proudfit, and the other four to Mr. Steel. Mr. Proudfit, some time after we came down, returned to Pennsylvania, and accepted a call that had been given him before he came down. It was about the beginning of October before the people heard that he was to return. These eight congregations met together by commissioners, with Mr. Steel among them. He endeavored to persuade them to give a call to a Mr. Young, in Virginia, who had been formerly here, and was very popular, and was about to leave his people; but two of the congregations would not consent, and have applied to us for sermon. We have since preached

several times at those places, and conversed with some of the people. One of these places is distant from us fourteen miles, the other nine. It is proposed that one of us should have the charge of these two places, together with this.

"At Drennon's Creek, where your brother lives, the congregation is small. Some of the country near it is not yet settled. There are some Baptists and Methodists in that neighborhood, and many make no profession of religion. The people, there, however, are preparing to build a meeting-house. We have preached sometimes at Shelbyville, about fourteen miles from your brother's, but there is little prospect of forming a congregation in that place. It is the county town. A good many people live in and near it. They are destitute of the gospel, and what is still worse, they seem to have little relish for it. About three months ago we were invited to preach at Beargrass, near the falls of the Ohio. There the prospect for the present is much better. A considerable number of the inhabitants seem willing to hear and support the gospel. It is proposed the other of us should have the charge at Drennon's Creek and Beargrass. These are distant better than twenty miles, which makes it inconvenient.

"When we were in Philadelphia, Mr. Marshall showed us petitions from two different places in Tennessee State, to their Presbytery, and desired us, if possible, to give them some assistance, for they could afford them none, and he wrote them to apply to us. Accordingly, about the beginning of May, a man came from Cumberland settlement, with a petition for one of us to go there for some short time. It was agreed betwixt us, that I should go for a few weeks. I went there about the middle of June, and staid there seven Sabbaths. I preached three Sabbaths at Nashville, the chief town in that place, and in various other parts of the country. In that town, and indeed in almost all the new formed towns in this western colony, there are few religious people. The inhabitants chiefly consist of lawyers, tavern and store keepers, and many of these are infidels. There are a number of religious people in the country around Nashville. A certain William Turnbull, a Scotsman, who (if I recollect right) was once a member of Mr. Arnot's congregation, is a very worthy man, and has been remarkably useful in diffusing religious knowledge. There I baptized sixteen children and two women. On the north side of Cumberland river, the country is settled to a considerable extent. Two Presbyterian ministers are in it, about fifty miles distant from each other. On the south side of the river, where I chiefly was, the settlement is not so ex-

tensive of any kind. The people with whom I got acquainted earnestly desire a minister of the gospel; and they think they are well able to support one. Some time after I returned, the other people in Tennessee, who live near Knoxville, sent a man for the same purpose; he waited about ten days, and Mr. Armstrong went along with him. Our connections there are a great deal more numerous. Mr. Armstrong ordained five elders, and baptized a good many children. They were wishing the sacrament dispensed to them, but that could not be overtaken. About fifty families attached to the Secession Testimony live in a body.

"The Presbytery met for the first time upon the 28th of November. We could not conveniently meet in that capacity sooner. We had elders to ordain, both in this place and in Drennon's Creek. Each of us had been away a considerable time; and we thought it best not to constitute the Presbytery till there was an appearance of us both continuing in this State. Various petitions for sermon were presented to the Presbytery, besides one from each of the places in Tennessee, for further supply. They also want us to assist them to procure a fixed ministry. The Presbytery agreed to write to the brethren in the back parts of Pennsylvania, that, if possible, they would send one minister or preacher, even although it were only for a short time, to our assistance; but in present circumstances, we do not expect much relief from that quarter. It was farther agreed upon, to write to some of the ministers in Scotland, in order that they may represent our situation before the Synod; entreating them that they would send one minister, at least, to this western part of the world, to take part of the ministry with us, and assist in declaring the light of divine truth in this extensive country. I think, from every appearance, that before a minister can reach this from Scotland, there will be work for several. Besides the two places in Tennessee, that in some manner are formed congregations already, it is more than probable that we will not be able to answer all the applications that may be made in this country. Some few people applied to us for sermon who formerly were connected with our body in Pennsylvania, but who now live on the other side of the Ohio river. There also are extensive settlements, but none of us could get to see them.

"Mr. Armstrong has written a letter to Messrs. Culbertson and M'Crie about this matter, and *I* engaged to write to *you*. The people in Tennessee are very desirous to have ministers from Scotland. We told them that it would be necessary to

raise money for bringing them over, and that it could not be expected that the Synod would always be willing to do that. William Turnbull and several others, to whom I spoke on that head, allowed that it was very just, were they to get a minister from Scotland, that they should bear his expenses; but, in their present circumstances, it was more than they could do. He said that the members of this society would be willing to contribute liberally for that purpose; but, being few in number, any sum that they could raise would not be nearly adequate; and though it could not be expected that others who did not interest themselves would give much to bring a minister they never saw, and knew little, if any thing, about the society from whom he was sent; he thought, if a minister was there, it would not be difficult to raise a sum for defraying what expenses he might lay out in coming. The people near Knoxville are able to do more; and I think Mr. Armstrong said he was taking measures for that purpose. Lest the matter should be unnecessarily delayed, Mr. Armstrong and I have agreed to request the Synod, by you, that they would at least send one minister to our assistance; and we engage to remit the Synod, as soon as we can, the sum of £60 sterling, or even the whole the Synod may lay out, if it can be raised. We allow that the people here should assist the others, who either may not at first be so able or so willing.

"Dear sir, The situation of the Tennessee people gives me a considerable degree of concern. How distressing is it for a number of religious people to be almost entirely destitute of a dispensation of the gospel! David, when he was in the wilderness, thirsted and longed to see the power and glory of God in the sanctuary. The dispositions of the children of God in every age are alike; yet one silent Sabbath comes after another, and still the glad tidings are not heard. How can they prosper, and be in spiritual health, when there is none to break the bread of life among them? How must it grieve them, to see a thoughtless and giddy generation around them, going on in a course of wickedness without any check? In all Tennessee State, from any thing that I have learned, where thousands reside, there is scarcely any who preach the gospel in its purity. For years they have petitioned the Associate Presbytery, without obtaining any supply. Many of them, it is hoped, are looking up and crying to God for assistance; and under Him, they are now turning their eyes towards us, and entreating our aid. Each of these places is distant from us better than two hundred miles, and nearly

as far from one another; it is very seldom we can visit them, and can stay only a short time when we go. The ministers of our connection in the Northern States can afford little, if any assistance, either to them or to us. Where then should we look but to our native country, to our dear fathers and brethren in the ministry, who evidenced so much unanimity and forwardness in sending us, that they would show the same unanimity and zeal in sending others to places equally destitute of the means of grace? It certainly is an object worthy of the serious consideration of the Reverend Synod, to have the gospel in its purity planted in this extensive country, where society is making such rapid progress.

"Dear sir, We have great confidence in you, that you will exert yourself in our behalf; that you will exercise your prudence, and use your influence in this matter. There is a good deal of caution necessary in fixing on a proper object to send to this country. You can converse and correspond with other ministers about this business. I hope this letter will reach you previous to the meeting of Synod in May. We hope you will early find one preacher, or two, if the Synod think proper, whose hearts God hath touched, and who will not be backward to leave their friends, their acquaintance, and their native country, and come to a foreign land to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to perishing sinners; who will be actuated, not by mercenary motives, when they take such an important step; not as to acquire worldly riches, and to enjoy honors, or carnal ease and pleasure; but stimulated by a principle of love to the great Head of the Church, filled with an holy desire of being instrumental in promoting the Redeemer's spiritual kingdom in the world, and the best interests of men, who are willing to labor and travel, and endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It would be vain for any person, especially any minister coming to this country, to think that he would meet with no difficulties. But who in this world are without difficulties? Is it not encouraging that they have a call in providence to come? that the work, though difficult, is honorable? May they not rely upon the promise of God, 'Wherever I record my name, there will I come to thee, and I will bless thee?' Is it not some advantage to know, that in that part of the country where they are likely to reside there are a number of religious people ready to recive them with unfeigned joy? The part of Tennessee State where I was is excellent. The land, in many places at least, is equal to this, and in some respects even preferable. The country in general seems to be

better watered than this; and some articles, such as indigo, cotton, &c. are in great perfection. The weather in summer is much warmer than in Scotland; but I suppose there is very little difference in this respect between Tennessee State and this. I was in Cumberland in the month of July, and felt no great inconvenience from it. One cannot sit or stand for any length of time under the rays of the sun, but a person may sit in the house or ride in the woods with pleasure. All things considered, had we not been appointed to come to this State, were it not that the expectations of our friends here would have been utterly disconcerted, and the society in danger of being broken up, I would have preferred settling in Cumberland to this country. It is somewhat discouraging indeed, that a minister settled there would be so far from us. But one can easily ride it in five days and a half, which is not much thought of here. We could meet at times in Presbytery, and even assist one another on sacramental occasions. We forbear to point out any individual, for there may be various arrangements since we left Scotland. Some who were then preachers may now be ordained ministers. We leave the choosing as well as the sending of those who may come to our assistance, wholly to the Synod. I suppose the best way for any to come to Tennessee State is by Pittsburgh, and the best time to come to any part of this country is in the months of November, December, or early in the spring. Books of all kinds in this back country are dear; but those from Britain, that are reprinted in New-York and Philadelphia, are generally cheaper than at home, because for the most part they are printed upon a less extensive scale; but commentaries and books of that sort, which one may need, ought to be brought from Scotland.

"Very dear sir, There are many other things I would wish to mention, but the letter is already too long; I therefore must conclude. We have both had our health well since we came to America. Mr. Armstrong was for a short time indisposed at Pittsburgh, and I was distressed with tooth-ache after we came into the State. For the same length of time I have had my health as well in this country as in Scotland. This ought to be ascribed to the kindness of God, who gives us these things richly to enjoy. I see no reason as yet to repent of coming to America. The customs of the people seemed a little strange at first, but now they are familiarizing. I feel myself as easy in company as when I was at home. My friends and former acquaintances are in Scotland; but I have got acquainted with a good many here, and have a consider-

able degree of intimacy with some. In short, I begin to be interested for the public prosperity of this, as if it were my native country, and scarce ever feel an inclination to return. But so long as I am in this vale of tears, I shall never forget dear Scotland, the place of my birth and of my youthful days. I shall always rejoice in her prosperity, and be deeply grieved if at any time the cup of adversity be put into her hand; and I hope I shall never cease to pray, that, as in former times, Britain may continue to the latest ages to be one of those Isles that wait for God's law.

"I remain, your affectionate and much obliged fellow laborer in the gospel,

"ANDREW FULTON.

"Canerun, Jan. 9, 1799.
"Rev. ALEXANDER PRINGLE."

"Canerun, near Lexington, June 5, 1799.

[After describing the State of Kentucky, and, in answer to the requests of many of his friends in Scotland, informing them as to those mechanical branches which are most successful there, and with which we do not trouble our readers, Mr. Armstrong proceeds thus:]

* * * "I shall only add at present, that the soil of Kentucky is fully as rich as I expected. One circumstance, however, renders *this State* disagreeable to those who allow the dictates of humanity, or the voice of reason and of their own consciences, to have greater influence upon their minds than a regard to their ease or personal interest. I speak of the practice of slave-holding, which, as it obtains in Kentucky, no impartial mind can contemplate without indignation. The haughty insolence and shocking barbarity with which the poor slaves are too generally treated, do not fail to excite compassion in every feeling heart, where self-interest or the gratification of pride do not prevail against all other considerations. An attempt has been lately made to procure a *gradual* emancipation of the negroes. A Convention for the reformation of the *State* Constitution has been called; but the slave-masters were so deeply interested in the event, that their exertions have carried the election almost every where in their favor, so that scarce any who are *not* the *friends* of slavery will go to the Convention. All hopes of obtaining an emancipation are therefore cut off, and slavery, so destructive of the spirit of industry, so contrary to the political interests of the Commonwealth, so hurtful to the morals of the people, and so

inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, will be continued by law.

"Since the date of my letter to the Rev. Messrs. Culbertson and McCrie, Mr. Fulton and I have got the bounds of our habitations fixed. This was an extremely delicate business, but it has been effected apparently to the satisfaction of all parties. The nearest boundary of Mr. Fulton's congregation is forty, and the most distant at least seventy miles from the place of my residence, which is eight miles from Lexington. My congregation is near the centre of the country, in one of the most fertile, thickest settled, and best cultivated parts of Kentucky, and where society is the most improved. I have three places for public worship, each of which, by contract, is entitled to one-third of my public labors. Two of the three places where I preach are eight miles apart, and the third is fifteen miles distant from each of the others. Two of these are sufficiently able to maintain me; the third could neither support a minister, nor obtain one if they could support him.

"My stipend exceeds, by about £15 sterling, what is usually given by the best congregations to their minister within the bounds of your Presbytery. For my board and lodging, together with keeping of my horse, I pay only £15 sterling a year. My accommodation is very good, and the people with whom I lodge are as kind and attentive as could be wished for; their temporal circumstances, as well as the interest they take in my affairs, place them beyond the consideration of making money by me. Indeed, this is the only place which I have seen in Kentucky where I could live comfortably as a bachelor.

"Mr. Fulton has about £15 sterling more stipend than I receive. His congregation, however, is neither more wealthy nor more numerous than mine; but the places of worship which it contains are much further separated from one another, and this last circumstance rendered such an addition necessary to defray his traveling expenses.

"Considering the very discouraging prospect which, a little more than a year ago, presented itself to us in this country, we have abundant occasion for gratitude and thanksgiving to God, who has so much disappointed our fears, and to such a degree made our way prosperous. Taking into account the infant state of this congregation with which I am connected, the number of members belonging to it is considerable; several of them are men respectable from their situation in the world, as well as from their talents and piety. Several members of

session are such as would fill that office with credit in any congregation in Britain, a circumstance which gives me particular satisfaction. Yet, till now, I never knew so well the labors, the disquietude, the vexation, and the grief attending the work of the ministry. For though there are several sensible and religious people in my congregation, the stupid ignorance of some who put themselves under my inspection, and the careless indifference or hardened insensibility of others, render it necessary for me to be 'instant in season and out of season.' While on such occasions, I have endeavored to impress the minds of individuals or families with a sense of the necessity and importance of religion, and of a due attention to the duties which belong to the christian character, I have been left to weep over the insensibility of some, who seemed to be callous against all convictions, and hardened in their disregard to the things of God, though they attend the public ordinances of the gospel; upon others, it is thought, some apparent impression has been made.

"But, alas! sir, I can give you no splendid accounts of any revival of religion under my ministry, nor indeed of any revival which I have heard of in Kentucky. Whatever may have been the case as to other places, the accounts which appear in pamphlets or magazines, concerning such revivals in this country, have deceived you not a little. I have been upon the spot; and were I to give you a description of them, drawn from an observation of their effects, or from the testimony of men who saw them in their rise and in their progress, and whose veracity and piety it would be improper to call in question, the attempt would seem invidious, and would wear the appearance of a wish to disrespect the labors or to cast a shade over the merits of the ministers who were said to be instrumental in these revivals.

"The enthusiastic attachment of many religionists in this and in other parts of the United States, to Dr. Watts's Hymns, or to other compositions of the same sort, has lessened their respect for the word of God in general, and especially to the Old Testament scriptures, which by not a few are almost wholly disregarded. It appears to me, according to the best information, that more than the half of the inhabitants of Kentucky are professed infidels. There are upwards of twenty Presbyterian ministers in this country, connected with the General Synod of New-York and Philadelphia; several of them, according to my information, preach the gospel, though in a manner somewhat exceptionable; others, and, it is reported, the most of them, have adopted Dr. Watts's

notions relative to the person of Christ. It is asserted that some, though more privately, call in question the doctrine of the Trinity, and seem inclined to embrace the Arian system, respecting that article of the christian faith. The peculiar opinions of Mr. Richard Baxter are more or less incorporated with the religious sentiments of them all. The temporal support which they receive from their congregations is, for the most part, very scanty, and extremely precarious, so that several of them are under the necessity of providing for their families by working with their own hands, or by other means.

"Before my arrival in Kentucky, it gave me no small pleasure to think that I would *here* be employed in preaching the gospel, without being troubled or harassed by such divisions as prevail in Scotland. In this, however, I was greatly mistaken; for, besides the religious denominations already mentioned, Kentucky contains Methodists, Baptists, &c. in great numbers; but the Baptists are generally such as Messrs. Booth and Maclean would not acknowledge for *Brethren*. It occurred to me after our arrival at the place of our destination, that one of the religious denominations *here*, who considered themselves most injured by our ministry, would commence a paper war against us; and I sometimes smiled at the thoughts of being obliged to sit down to write a Seceder pamphlet; but no such attemps have been made, and I therefore had no opportunity to make a trial of my controversial skill. And, I know *you* will give me all manner of credit in saying, that I was much better satisfied to live in peace, and to be delivered from that trouble. Various means, however, have been used more privately to misrepresent our principles or our procedure, but generally without success; and it is a great mercy that no man, so far as I know, has hitherto attempted to injure the cause in which we are engaged, by venturing to arraign our *personal conduct*.

"Thus, my friend, I have endeavored, in as few words as possible, to describe my situation. It differs in a great variety of respects, from that of any Seceding minister in Britain. The planting of churches is difficult and laborious work. The exercise of the ministerial office here would require at the same time invincible resolution, yet prudence, unwearied industry, and zealous activity in the service of Christ, with a disposition to become all things to all men, and a calmness of temper which can scarcely be ruffled. But who is sufficient for these things? For my own part, I am far, very far, from having great pretensions to these qualities. I have been

sometimes obliged to put on a brow of brass in my public ministrations, to 'rebuke and exhort with all authority,' and have succeeded so far, that the openly profane who despise religion are either driven away from our assemblies, or forced to behave in them with tolerable decency. It is a disagreeable situation for a minister to be under the necessity of addressing himself to an assembly, the greater part of which consists of declared infidels. In this situation, however, I have sometimes found myself placed; on such occasions my fortitude had never forsaken me in so great a degree as I feared. What we have already been enabled to go through, and the countenance we have already received, affords us great reason to 'thank God and take courage.' But notwithstanding all that I have said, I sincerely declare to you, that I do not repent my acceptance of a mission to Kentucky. I entertain no fears with regard to temporal support, and I have the prospect of being much more useful in promoting the general interests of the kingdom of Christ *here* than I should have been in Scotland.

"We have two vacancies in the State of Tennessee. One of them I have not seen. The other, on several accounts, promises to be a charge perhaps more eligible than any under our inspection. Indeed, Mr. F. and I have taken to ourselves those stations which appeared to be the most difficult, the most precarious, and the most liable to be injured by the want of ministers; leaving the rest, as better established, to depend upon our supplies, and to wait the arrival of other ministers. I mentioned my journey to Tennessee in the letter already referred to; and that you may understand my mode of journeying through the wilderness between this place and Tennessee, take the following account of it. Besides the ordinary necessaries for traveling with you, I first take care to provide me in a large wallet, one end of which contains provision for myself, the other for my horse; then I get what is here called an Indian blanket, the use of which I shall describe by and by; both of these are fixed on the horse, along with the saddle-bags. Some of your nice, high-minded Scotch ministers, will now be ready to exclaim, 'What! travel in this mean plight! Expose the gospel to contempt!' But stay a little. This is done by all classes of men in such a situation, and what is common, does not detract from any man's dignity. Well, to proceed on my journey. You must now suppose me equipped as above, and moving along till I find a spring or a brook, when it is necessary to rest a little. Here, after my horse has begun feeding, I sit down under a tree and finish my

repast out of the wallet. Then I fix every thing and remount. Having thus refreshed myself at proper intervals, I come to a mean log cabin in the evening, where again I eat my supper out of the wallet. But there is no bed which I choose to occupy; I therefore throw my saddle-bags on the floor for a pillow, and wrapping myself in the Indian blanket, I lie down to sleep, with my feet to a great fire (if it is cold.) Sometimes I get a bear's skin under me, and sometimes not. In this manner I move on from Monday morning till Saturday night, for upwards of two hundred miles, when I come to the end of my journey; all the while, though out sometimes in snow and sometimes in rain, I feel myself as hearty and well as ever I did in my life, and exposed to less danger of catching cold, than if I had reposed every night upon a bed of down.

"Three members of the congregation, about eighteen or twenty miles distant from Knoxville, the seat of government in Tennessee, who, at midnight, heard of my arrival there on the evening of the preceding day, came to meet me in the morning; and I was not a little affected when the honest men told me with tears, that for more than ten years they had been waiting and praying for such a day. A reception of this sort was surely the best encouragement I could have met with. In Blount county, the profession of religion is general. I heard no account of any open infidels; here there was no occasion to reprove my audience for their inattention, or improper behavior in the time of public worship. Here, too, I found several persons, who had never before seen or heard a minister of our communion, whose religious principles were the same with mine. They had separated from the Presbyterian congregation in this place, because they could approve neither of the doctrine taught, nor of the mode of worship in that congregation! They joined themselves in praying societies with some who had been formerly acquainted with the principles of the Secession, and along with them waited for a minister from whom they could receive the ordinances of the gospel. An extensive field for the propagation of the gospel presents itself in this country; and I feel anxious, extremely anxious, that if possible, a minister could be got for this part of Tennessee. Mr. Fulton, who is best acquainted with the state of the other congregations in Tennessee, will inform his friends in Scotland respecting it. I am, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

"ROB. ARMSTRONG."

About the time of which we are now speaking, viz. 1798, the Presbytery and the church at large sustained a heavy loss in the death of Mr. Beveridge. By his death, an important and interesting portion of the church was left wholly destitute of a stated dispensation of gospel ordinances.

He possessed peculiar qualifications for usefulness in the exigencies of the Associate Church at that time. He was an able defender and faithful teacher of the truth, whether in doctrine, discipline or practice, and left the people among whom he labored, well grounded in, and ardently attached to, all the particular doctrines of revealed truth, as witnessed for in their public profession. And to the seed sown by this good man, as a means, may be evidently traced, even at this distance of time, (forty years,) the fruits now appearing in a witnessing remnant, in the principal field of his labors. Of that people, it might be said, as was said of the congregation of Israel, "They served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and who had known all the works which the Lord had done for Israel." He left an *eldership*, as well as a people, eminent for intelligence and exemplary for piety. It ought to afford just ground of joy, now, when the most of *their grey hairs are under the clay*, to find, all things considered, so many "of their children walking in the truth."

In the Associate Church, as well as in every society which has existed for any length of time, were doubtless many who had been induced to join her communion from motives of convenience, personal attachments or public opinion; these would of course be more influenced by these variable circumstances, as to their continuance in the church, than by a conscientious love to the principles of their profession—accordingly, many left her communion; some, perhaps, through ignorance of the great divergence which had taken place between the Associate and the Associate Reformed bodies. But still there were many who were conscientiously attached to the principles of their profession, and were ready to endure any inconvenience or suffering to which, in Providence, they might be called, on account of what they believed to be the truths of God's word. Those persons, seeing and understanding the consequences of the union, as regarded the distinguishing principles for which the Associate Church, both in Scotland and America, had uniformly witnessed, continued to look to the Presbytery for aid. In Virginia and North and South Carolina, particularly after the death of Dr. Clark, which occurred in the close of the year 1792, there were ap-

plications to the Presbytery for supply of ordinances from different places, to which they resolved to send such aid as their means would permit.

To supply those distant places, it became necessary to appoint some of the settled ministers* besides those who were itinerating. Accordingly, Dr. Anderson and others, were sent at different times on missions to the Carolinas. The union was at this time espoused and defended with some zeal by Mr. Hemphill, who was a settled minister in that country. His defence of the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod, led Dr. Anderson, while on his mission there, to publish a series of letters, addressed to Mr. Hemphill, in which he, in a very clear and able manner, examined the principles set forth in that Constitution, showing its defects and departures from the received principles of the Secession Church. The publication of these letters was supposed to be the cause of a considerable extension of the influence of the Associate Church in that country at that time.* Presbytery continued to send other supplies to the Carolinas from time to time, until a Presbytery was erected there, after the organization of the Associate Synod of North America.

At Rockbridge, in Virginia, a congregation was also erected about 1790, or shortly afterwards. The Rev. John Crie, who was ordained at New-York, Oct. 12th, 1792, was for some time settled as pastor there, though he afterwards removed to Ligonier, in Pennsylvania, where he died.

For many years, the Associate Church in America, had to depend wholly on the Synod in Scotland for her supply of ministers; and although the Synod manifested a very liberal spirit in supplying the wants of the church here, yet all that could be sent from Scotland was far from being adequate to the demand. From 1784, in which year Mr. Beveridge arrived, until 1795, when the first student was licensed by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, the following ministers only were received, viz: Messrs. David Goodwillie, Archiba'd Whyte, David Somerville, John Crie, Robert Laing, and perhaps Dr. Banks.

The Presbytery, feeling the want of a sufficient supply of ministers, resolved to adopt measures, as early as practicable, for educating young men for the gospel ministry in this country. Accordingly, Dr. Anderson was appointed to superintend the studies of such young men as offered themselves. A

* The Rev. William Dixon, of South Carolina, joined the Presbytery, but the particular time, and his previous history, I have not learned.

similar course of instruction was pursued to that adopted by the Synod in Scotland. The first student licensed by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, was Mr. William Wilson, in 1795, now the venerable pastor of the Associate congregation of Montiurs, near Pittsburgh. The next was Mr. James Duncan, for some time pastor of the united Associate congregations of Poland, Liberty and Deerfield, in the Presbytery of Ohio. The next to these was a class consisting of Messrs. Thomas Alison, Thomas Hamilton, and Ebenezer Henderson. This class was succeeded by Messrs. Thomas M'Clintock and Daniel M'Lean ; but it is believed not until after the erection of the Synod.

Before closing the history of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, it will be proper to notice, that at a meeting at Philadelphia, April 29, 1791, Presbytery passed an act concerning public covenanting, since published with the Declaration and Testimony. Though this ordinance receives but little countenance from the great majority of professing christians in the present age, yet it is believed to have been a mean, under the divine blessing, of preserving the doctrines, discipline and order of worship of the Reformation in the Associate Church, with so little variation, until the present time. This truly scriptural practice, which was very familiar to the Reformation Churches both in the British Islands, and on the continent of Europe, was solemnly observed in the city of New-York, on Thursday, the 12th of October, 1792, by the members of the Presbytery, together with the elders and other members of the Associate congregation of New-York. The day was spent as a day of solemn humiliation and prayer; it was on the forenoon of the same day, that Mr. Crie was ordained to the office of the holy ministry, at the same place.

Another act, passed by the Presbytery a few years afterwards, 1796, had an important influence on the Associate Church; this was the ACT AGAINST OCCASIONAL COMMUNION. Notwithstanding the fulness with which the distinguishing points in the profession of the Associate Church were exhibited in the Declaration and Testimony, yet the Presbytery judged themselves called upon to condemn, in a still more pointed manner, the latitudinarian sentiments respecting communion, which then, and ever since, have so extensively prevailed in this country. The scheme of intercommunion, in sealing ordinances between denominations, still keeping up a separate ecclesiastical Constitution, and thus refusing to unite as one, had become very general. But many who freely ac-

knowledged that communion in sealing ordinances was sinful and inconsistent among those who differed in sentiment, could not see any evil or error in holding communion, in teaching ordinances with those with whom they could not unite in sealing ordinances. On account of these, Presbytery prepared, and after due consideration, adopted an act on that subject, at their meeting in New-York, Sept. 29th, 1796. This act still remains in force as the standing rule of the church on this subject, it having never been repealed or superceded by another.*

From the foregoing facts, it appears that the members of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania had very considerably increased in numbers, and were scattered over an extended range of country. The States of New-York, Vermont, Virginia and the two Carolinas, were comprehended within the bounds of the Presbytery of Pennsylvania. A new Presbytery had been erected by the General Associate Synod of Scotland, which extended over the States of Kentucky and Tennessee; or rather, the Missionaries sent to Kentucky, were authorized by the Synod to constitute themselves into a Presbytery, as soon as they would find it expedient, which they did on the 28th day of November, 1798, under the name of the Associate Presbytery of Kentucky.

The circumstances of the church, particularly the number and location of the ministers rendered it highly necessary, by this time, to divide into a greater number of Presbyteries, and to erect these into a Synod, which was accordingly done. The name and designation adopted for the Synod, was, the Associate Synod of North America—Consisting at first of four Presbyteries, viz: The Presbytery of Cambridge, consisting of the congregations and ministers in the States of New-York and Vermont, except the city of New-York.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia, comprehending the congregations and ministers, in Pennsylvania, east of the Allegheny Mountains, in the city of New-York, in Virginia, east of the Mountains, and in the Carolinas.

The Presbytery of Chartiers, which consisted of western Pennsylvania, Virginia and adjacent parts; and the Presbytery of Kentucky, as already noticed.

These Presbyteries were all subordinate to the Synod, and the Synod was constituted upon the principle of subordination to the General Associate Synod of Scotland, which had been recognized by the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and

* See appendix M.

which is set forth in the act of the Associate Synod of Scotland, defining the connection of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania with said Synod, passed at Edinburgh, May 7th, 1788, which act has been appended to all the editions of the Testimony published since that time.

In this act, this subordination is declared "*to have been from the beginning, no more than a scriptural union, according to the plan of Presbyterial church government.*"

The Associate Synod of North America held its first meeting in the city of Philadelphia, on the 20th of May, 1801. It was opened with a sermon by Mr. Marshall, who was chosen the first Moderator, and the Rev. Francis Pringle, who had come over from the General Associate Synod in 1799, was chosen the first Stated Clerk.

This event forms a new epoch in the history of the Associate Church in America. With it we intend to close our history for the present. We have now traced the history of the Associate Church, during the first half century of her existence in America. We have seen her struggling through a long infantile period; and at length, after many discouraging trials, attaining to some degree of maturity and strength. We have seen her beginning small, like a handful of corn in the earth upon the tops of the mountains, and again the fruit thereof shaking, to some extent like Lebanon. We have seen her gradually rising from a small beginning, two ministers coming over the Atlantic at the call of a few individuals, and these immediately attacked and denounced by those,* whom, in this land, they might expect would at least have permitted them to remain in peace, if they would not take them by the hand. We have seen her struggling for nearly thirty years against various adversities and trials, from within and without her own pale, from removals by death of those who, in an eminent sense, seemed to be pillars,† from the defection and apostacy of others, yet still making advances, and like the vine from Egypt, beginning to extend her roots and spread out her branches. We have then seen her suddenly brought down and reduced to her original number. We have seen her again taking root, reviving and extending her branches comparatively far and wide; and amidst all her changes and trials, still holding, at least in her public profession, the same doctrine, discipline and practice for which the Secession Church first lifted up a distinct banner—witnessing both to small and great. Surely this is the doing of the Lord, and marvellous in our eyes,

* The New Castle Presbytery. † Mr. Gellatly and others.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

AND

SERMONS.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE REV. WILLIAM MARSHALL.

William Marshall was born about the year 1740, near Abernethy, in the county of Fife, in Scotland. His father was a respectable farmer; and for many years an elder in the Associate congregation under the pastoral care of the Rev. Alexander Moncrief, one of the four ministers who first seceded from the Church of Scotland.

Mr. Marshall having gone through the preparatory studies, was admitted into the divinity hall, under the inspection of Mr. Moncrief, of whom he always spoke with affection.

After attending the usual course of lectures, he was taken on trials by the Associate Presbytery of Perth, with a view to his being licensed to preach the gospel, and with the particular design of sending him to America. Mr. Pierie, also, was taken on trials at the same time, and with the same view. The texts given them by the Presbytery, to preach from, were suited to the occasion. That of Mr. Pierie was, (Isaiah vi. 8,) "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*" Mr. Marshall was to preach from the last clause, "*Here am I, send me.*" Mr. Pierie did not fulfill his mission; and soon afterward joined another religious denomination. The several discourses delivered by Mr. Marshall before the Presbytery were approved; he was licensed to preach, and immediately sent on a mission to Pennsylvania.

He landed at Philadelphia in August, 1763. In October, 1764, the congregation at Deep Run, Bucks county, gave him a call to be their minister. The congregations of Octorara and Muddy Creek, also drew up calls for him soon after-

ward. These three calls were presented to the Presbytery that met on the 1st of November, 1764, at Octorara. Presbytery agreed that Mr. Marshall should have his choice, except Mr. Henderson, who had it marked in the minutes, that he was of opinion that the Presbytery ought to decide the business. Mr. Marshall was informed that he might make choice of any of the three calls. He accepted the one from Deep Run; and gave as the reasons of his doing so, the unanimity of the people; their being formerly disappointed; their local situation rendering it difficult for the Presbytery to supply them with preaching. The Presbytery immediately gave him his trial discourses in view of ordination; which being delivered at an interim meeting and sustained, he was ordained at Deep Run, on the 30th of August, 1765. Mr. John Mason preached the ordination sermon, from John iii. 10, and fixed the pastoral relation.

Petitions for supply of preaching, being sent to the Presbytery from Philadelphia, Mr. Marshall preached there. In 1768, the congregation petitioned for the moderation of a call, which was drawn up for him, May 16th, and presented to the Presbytery on June 22d, the same year; with reasons for his removal. The Presbytery having cited the people at Deep Run to appear at their next meeting, delayed the consideration of the call till then. On the 31st of August the Presbytery met again, and heard the reasons of the congregation of Philadelphia for Mr. Marshall's removal, and those of the congregation of Deep Run against it. The decision was delayed till the next meeting; and was then further delayed until a meeting at Philadelphia. April 19th, 1769, when the Presbytery unanimously loosed Mr. Marshall from his charge at Deep Run, and presented to him the call from Philadelphia, which he accepted with this limitation, "that his installment be delayed till the Lord grant him further light about it." This was agreed to. For two years afterwards, he preached mostly in Philadelphia, and on the 30th of April, 1771, the pastoral relation between him and the congregation was fixed. Mr. Annan presided on the occasion, and preached from Isaiah liii. 11.

Mr. Marshall was the first of the Associate Presbytery that officiated in Philadelphia. The number of the people was small; and as they had no place of worship, he preached in a vendue store. A small farm house was afterwards occupied in Shippen-street; but this being limited by deed to a congregation in connection with the Burghers, and a contest about the property being likely to ensue, it was resolved to build

another place of worship. A lot of ground was purchased in Spruce-street, and the church erected in 1771. The expenses incurred were far above the ability of the people, few or none being in affluent circumstances. In order to lighten the burden of the congregation, recourse was had to soliciting subscriptions. Mr. Marshall was very diligent, and in a considerable degree successful in collecting money; yet notwithstanding the exertions made to obtain pecuniary aid, a large debt encumbered the congregation for many years.

In the contest between Britain and her colonies, Mr. Marshall was decidedly in favor of the latter. When the British army took possession of Philadelphia, in 1777, he was consequently obliged to take refuge in the country; where he preached mostly among his old people at Deep Run. The congregation of Philadelphia suffered much at this time from the evils of war. The church was made a hospital for the Hessians; the pews were torn down and destroyed, and the windows mostly broken; the people were scattered through various parts of the country, and several of them never returned. A good deal of Mr. Marshall's household furniture was carried off; so that when the British left the city in 1778, he and the congregation had the world to begin anew; and it was some time before the church was fully repaired.

No transaction in which Mr. Marshall ever was engaged, was followed with so important consequences to himself, and to the church with which he was connected in America, as the opposition he made to a union with the Reformed Presbytery, or as they are commonly called Covenanters.

From the commencement of the American Revolution the ministers of the Associate Presbytery were unanimously in favor of it; and the ministers of the Reformed Presbytery took the same side. One difference between the two bodies seemed thus to be done away; and it was proposed to unite. A Conference for this purpose was held in Lancaster county, in 1777. Mr. Marshall, however, was opposed to this union from the beginning,* on any plan, but that of the Reformed Presbytery's giving an explicit approbation of the principles of the Associate Presbytery. He was against any compromise, or the drawing up of articles of union in terms of doubtful construction.

On the 13th of June 1782, the union with the Reformed Presbytery was agreed upon, by the casting vote of the Moderator, Mr. Proudfit. The minority protested and ap-

* See Introduction.

pealed to the Synod in Scotland; this appeal being refused, Mr. Marshall read another protest: That the powers of the Associate Presbytery were vested in those who adhered to its true principles and constitution; and he, as clerk, took up the minutes and papers of the Presbytery, and with the minority retired to the Session House, chose a new Moderator, done some business, and then adjourned.

Mr. Marshall being a man of influence, some pains were taken, in order to induce him to join the union. These overtures were uniformly rejected. To this he was encouraged by the approbation which his conduct, and that of Mr. Clarkson, met with from the Associate Synod; who had approved of their proceedings, and acknowledged them as the true Associate Presbytery, in union with the Synod.

Mr. Marshall had thus the peculiar satisfaction to find the part he had taken, in opposing the union, approved, and to see his adherents increasing. His situation in his own congregation, was, however, not agreeable; some of his people, among whom were four of his five elders, leaned towards the union; and though they attended his ministry, mutual jealousies took place, which at length came to an open rupture.

Those in the congregation who were attached to Mr. Marshall, were offended at the conduct of the elders, and suspicious of their designs; and in order to have some persons in the session, in whom they had confidence, petitioned in 1785, for an addition to the eldership. This, though agreeable to Mr. Marshall, the session flatly refused.

In the beginning of 1786, a petition was produced at a meeting of trustees, several of whom were elders, to the Assembly of the state, to annul that clause in the Deed of Trust for the church, which confined it to a congregation in subordination to the Associate Synod in Scotland; this they said was improper, since the colonies were independent. Great pains had been taken to introduce this limitation, which was now a bar in the way of those who wished to join the union, and to take the house of worship with them. Two of the trustees suspecting that their design went farther than what they professed, refused to join in this petition. It was carried through the congregation, and signed by a number of its members, and was afterwards presented to the Assembly. Mr. Marshall drew up a remonstrance against altering the Deed of Trust, which was also signed by his friends, and given in to the Assembly. Both parties were heard before a committee of that body. At length a bill was brought in, which annulled the subordination to the Synod, and besides added a

clause, whereby church officers were obliged to take the oath of allegiance to the state. The Assembly threw out this last section; and, as was the mode at that time, postponed the third reading of the bill till their next session. During the pending of this bill, the opposers of Mr. Marshall very ungenerously insinuated, that the Presbytery and their people were subject to a foreign jurisdiction, and so were dangerous to the state. They succeeded so far, as for a while to raise considerable agitation in the city.

Matters were hastening to a crisis in the congregation. The elders were cited to appear before their Presbytery, which met in Philadelphia on the 31st of May, 1786. Their conduct was voted censurable; but before they proceeded to any censure, a paper was read signed by four of the elders, signifying that they neither were nor had been in connection with the Presbytery since 1782, but belonged to another denomination. After reading this paper, the Presbytery, on motion of Mr. Marshall, immediately proceeded to censure; they deposed four of the elders, suspended one, and excluded all five from the fellowship of the church.

The excommunication, according to the Deed of Trust, deprived the elders, also, of their office of trustees; but they, in retaliation, resolved to hold their offices by force; and to expel Mr. Marshall. Accordingly, in a day or two, they sent him a written notice, forbidding him to enter the church. They barricaded the door and windows, and kept guard around the building. On next Sabbath morning, Mr. Marshall, according to legal advice, went to the church to demand entrance. He was met by the armed elders and their adherents, and forbidden to enter. On which he retired, and preached in an adjoining building. The next Sabbath the elders got a minister belonging to the Associate Reformed Synod, to preach in the church; they keeping guard as on the preceding Sabbath. Mr. Marshall went to the church for admittance, but was again met by the armed men: on being refused entrance, he read a paper protesting against any person occupying his pulpit, to which he had not forfeited his right. He then retired and preached as before.

Mr. Annan, who had been unsuccessful in gathering a congregation in Boston, came on to Philadelphia, in a few Sabbaths after Mr. Marshall had been thus violently kept out of his Meeting-House, and took possession of it, under circumstances which induced Mr. Marshall and others to think that the elders had been excited and directed in their course by his influence. He was afterwards installed as pastor, by the

authority of Synod, in that Meeting-House. But failing there also, in gathering a congregation, he left it; and it is worthy of notice, that he removed from the city only a few weeks before Mr. Marshall's decease.

In consequence of these violent proceedings, Mr. Marshall instituted a civil suit for the recovery of his Meeting-House. In the meantime, the trustees of the college unanimously granted him their hall to preach in until the cause was determined. This was a convenient place. The trustees and professors were very friendly; and he continued here about five years, until his new church was finished.

At the session of the legislature, that met in the fall of 1786, the bill for breaking the Deed of Trust was again taken up; and a renewed opposition made to it by Mr. Marshall, principally on the ground that the contest was at issue in the Supreme Court. The bill, however, passed into a law; but not without considerable opposition from a respectable number of the members of Assembly, who were so convinced of the injustice of the measure, that they entered a solemn protest against it. The party in the Assembly, who carried through this law, were at the next election thrown out of power, and continued so for many years.

Able lawyers were employed on both sides, in the trial before the Supreme Court. A mandamus was issued ordering the trustees to restore the pulpit to Mr. Marshall, or show cause why they will not. Their answer to the order, in substance was, "that Mr. Marshall, being in a minority in the vote about closing the union, schismatically separated from the Presbytery, and appealed to a foreign Synod, to which Americans are not subject; that the Presbytery, in consequence of this conduct, by their warning dismissed him from his pastoral charge; and that, therefore, he had no right to the pulpit; and therefore could not be restored." To this plea, Mr. Marshall put in a replication, asserting, that "the church was for the use of the congregation, under the inspection of the Associate Presbytery, as said Presbytery is subordinate to the Associate Synod of Edinburgh; and that he was not dismissed from the pastoral care of the congregation in June, 1782, nor deposed according to the form of discipline in use among Presbyterians."

The plea and reply were brought before a jury in Jan. 1789. Clergymen of various denominations were brought before the court, or their depositions read, in order to give information about various ecclesiastical matters that occurred in the cause. The court, in the charge to the jury, said it was a new case in

law and fact; and that they must decide according to the first principles of reason. No decision was given at this trial, as the jury were equally divided. The case was again brought up in July, 1790. The pleadings of the lawyers were able and eloquent. Judges M'Kean and Rush, who were on the bench, gave opposite charges to the jury :* the verdict was against Mr. Marshall.

It is remarkable, that a dispute in this small congregation, consisting of not quite sixty legal male voters, should be of so much difficulty and importance, as to divide the Assembly, judges and jury. But the case was new, and was strenuously contended by the parties; the discussion, also, involved several nice points, such as the Assembly's intermeddling with, and breaking a Deed of Trust, especially when there was a division among those concerned in it; the impropriety of an ecclesiastical judicature's being subordinate to a Synod in a foreign country; the legal right every society had to be protected in their peculiar principles and connections; whether a minister is bound to follow the majority of a Presbytery in forming a union, when he thinks they are wrong; the difference of principles between the Associate Presbytery and the union party; and whether Mr. Marshall was lawfully deposed by the Presbytery at the breach. This last was the turning point with the court, for the act of those who kept him out of the church by force, was allowed to be illegal, if there had not been a superior authority for it.

It was not pretended by any, that Mr. Marshall had changed his principles; but it was plead that the majority of the Presbytery had a right to make the union, and might censure such of their members as left them on that account; but supposing the censure or deposition to be legal, it was questioned whether his opponents, after having countenanced his ministry for four years thereafter, could expel him on account of the deposition.

Perhaps, what operated most strongly against Mr. Marshall in court, was a passage in the Narrative prefixed to the Testimony of the Associate Presbytery, and signed by himself as Moderator, where it is said, "that the warning against Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson, was a deposition from the ministry, only not according to the usual form, and by those who had no power to do it." It was hence inferred that

* The charge given by Judge Rush, is a lucid and elaborate production, evincing a thorough knowledge of the subject in hand, and a minute acquaintance with church discipline.

Messrs. Marshall and Clarkson considered themselves as really, though not formally deposed; and the court held that the informality of the deposition did not render it invalid.

At this day, it may be a matter of wonder, how it was possible that intelligent men ever came to these conclusions. In order to account for it, we will have to advert to the highly excited state of society at this time; it was at the close of the Revolution, when the minds of the community were exasperated at the British government—It was, therefore, exceedingly unpopular to be subordinate to any thing in Britain. To this state of feeling, so unfavorable to the administration of justice, we have no doubt the final decision in this case may be attributed.

It seems evident to us, from the passage quoted from the Narrative, even if there were no other documents going to prove the same thing, that the two brethren did *not* consider themselves as deposed in any manner.

As to the other conclusion to which the court arrived, that the informality of the deposition, did not render it invalid; we think the expediency of this rule, if not its justice, may be questioned. It has been observed that *forms*, though they are not justice themselves, are yet necessary handmaids to her.

This was a period in Mr. Marshall's life, in which he suffered much reproach, vexation and loss. He had always had a very slender income—not quite two hundred and twenty dollars; but notwithstanding his own poverty, and that of his congregation, and though he was in the decline of life, and made destitute of a place of public worship—yet he does not seem to have been at all discouraged, but to have borne his adversities with firmness and resolution.

The congregation resolved immediately to erect a new house, they purchased a lot in a central situation, and finished it in about a year.

When the verdict of the jury was given against Mr. Marshall, his opponents supposed it was all over with him in Philadelphia; and even that the Associate Presbytery had received a fatal blow. It was matter of surprise to them to see the new church erected so speedily, and the Presbytery still increasing. The church was opened for public worship on Sabbath, July 31st, 1791. Mr. Marshall's first discourse was from Haggai ii. 7, 8, 9:—"And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver and the gold is mine. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than

the glory of the former; and in this house will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts."

After having been so long in the fire of contention, it was agreeable for Mr. Marshall and his people to sit down in peace. They felt then how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. The temporal affairs of the church were also prosperous.

About the year 1795, the first preacher who had been educated in America was licensed by Mr. Marshall as Moderator of the Presbytery. Others were afterwards licensed, and by some accessions, the Presbytery increased so as to divide into four Presbyteries, and erect itself into a Synod. The first Associate Synod met in Philadelphia on the 21st of May, 1801; Mr. Marshall opened the Synod with a sermon, and was the first Moderator. This was no doubt a glad day to him. To see the Associate Church in America rise from two ministers, whom much pains had been taken to crush, to spread, and triumph over all opposition.

A friend said to him, a little before the first Synod met, "If you live to preach the Synod sermon, and to constitute the Synod, you may almost say with old Simeon, "Now let me depart in peace."

He cheerfully replied, you think I may then sing my *nunc dimittis.** His public services were indeed near an end, as he only lived to see the second meeting of Synod, in May, 1802. He was shortly after this attacked with a disease of the liver, the disorder was aggravated and its fatal termination hastened by his going this summer to New-York, to assist in ordaining Mr. Hamilton, and to Carlisle to install Mr. Pringle.

He died on Wednesday the 17th of November, 1802. On the Sabbath but one before his decease, he preached sitting in his chair; his last text was Psalm cxix. 75. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

Mr. Marshall's writings, though not considerable in extent, were useful in their tendency. He published a sermon on Psalmody, preached before the Associate Presbytery, in 1773, designed to show that the Psalms of David only, are to be sung in worship; and that Watt's Psalms, and all other Hymns are unlawful to be used in the church.—He afterwards published a Catechism for youth; to which was annexed an explication of religious names and sects. In conjunction with

* Departing Song.

Mr. Beveridge, he wrote a First Catechism for children. Between him and Mr. Beveridge a very intimate friendship subsisted; after the death of the latter, Mr. Marshall wrote Some Remarkable Passages of his life. He, also, wrote A Vindication of the Associate Presbytery, in answer to an attack on it by Mr. Annan; A Theological Tract, on the propriety of removing from places where the Yellow Fever prevails, was addressed by him to the serious people in Philadelphia and New-York; some of whom had scruples about this matter; An Act of the Associate Presbytery against occasional hearing, being printed, he accompanied it with a Review of the different religious denominations in the United States, in order to illustrate the propriety of the Act.

Mr. Marshall was esteemed by the whole body of his religious connections, and by others, for his usefulness, and his good conduct as a citizen: as an evidence of the high estimation in which he was held, we may mention that his funeral was attended by the Governor and Chief Justice of the state, and a large number of respectable citizens.

His congregation erected a monument to his memory, in front of the church with this inscription:

In Memory of

THE REV. WILLIAM MARSHALL.

A native of Scotland,

And First Pastor of this Church,

Who died Nov. 17, 1802,

In the 62d year of his age,

And in the 38th of his Ministry.

Be thou faithful unto the Death, and I will give thee a crown of Life.

Rev. ii. 10.

SERMON,

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MARSHALL.

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching, and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Colos. iii. 16.)

My Brethren,

You need not be informed that this Reverend Presbytery have appointed me to exhibit on this occasion, the propriety of singing the Psalms of David in Christian worship—a subject truly interesting, and far surpassing our abilities to manage properly. Conscious of this, we venture on it with a trembling heart, but desiring to look to the Lord, that he may send forth *the Spirit of truth, to guide us into all truth.*

The grand scope of the apostle Paul, in this letter to the church of Colosse, is to alarm her, of the danger she was in from the Jewish zealots. (who pressed the necessity of her observing the ceremonial law,) and to prevent her being tainted, with a mixture of Gentile philosophy. Though Paul had not the honor of planting this church, (this being conferred on Epaphras,) yet he shows his concern about her, by addressing her in this epistle; for, *he had daily the care of all the churches upon him.* He is now a prisoner at Rome, but forgets not the churches of God; He not only prays for them but sends unto them letters. What some observe of the Psalms of David, that such of them as were wrote in the wilderness have a peculiar sweetness in them, may be applied to Paul's epistles, that such of them as he wrote in prison are the most remarkable.

In this epistle we have the preface and the body of it. The preface lies from the beginning to the twelfth verse of the first chapter; then follows the body or substance of it, which is both doctrinal and practical. We have sundry practical directions given us in the preceding context. We are exhorted

to heavenly-mindedness, in ver. 1—5. to mortification of sin in the various instances of it, ver. 5—12. to brotherly love, ver. 15. to be subject to the peace of God, ver. 15. and in our text to a wise improvement of the word of Christ. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

In the following discourse on which words through divine aid, I shall,

I. Briefly show *how the word of Christ* should *dwell in us richly in all wisdom.*

II. I shall explain the way we are to *evidence this*, viz: *by teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.*

III. Illustrate the *manner* of performing this, by *singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.*

IV. I shall make some *practical improvement* of the whole.

I. I shall briefly show *how the word of Christ* should *dwell in us richly in all wisdom.* Here I shall offer the following observations.

First, That the *word of Christ* means the *whole* of divine revelation. This is called the *word of Christ*, because it was either spoken by himself immediately in his own person, or mediately in the ministry of the prophets and apostles. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. i. 21.) The Old and New Testaments are called the word of Christ, because he is the subject-matter of them; all the lines of divine revelation centre in him, as the rays in the sun. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." (John v. 39.) "To him gave all the prophets witness," (Acts x. 43.) &c. It is in the Scripture Christ continues to speak to the church, and hence "his name is called The Word of God." (Rev. xix. 13.)

Secondly, That the word of Christ should be our daily study; for it should *dwell* in us. The Greek word here rendered *dwell* signifies to *keep house;* This shows that the word of Christ should not be like a stranger or a way-faring man that taketh up his abode for a night, but it should be a residing guest with us; we ought to be well acquainted with it, as we are with those of our own families. But alas! although "God has written to us the great things of his law, yet they are counted as strange things." (Hos. viii. 12.) The sacred oracles should not dwell with us as servants do, whom we or-

der to obey us; this is the entertainment they receive from those who force interpretations on them to support their erroneous opinions and detestable practices, and thus *wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction;* but they should dwell with us as a master in his house, and we as servants, are from them to take direction with respect to the whole of our duty. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psal. cxix. 105.) Many have the word of Christ *dwelling with*, but not *in them;* this is the case with those who have Bibles in their houses, but do not read and study them. Let us hear with solemnity the divine charge given us concerning the word of Christ: "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." (Deut. vi. 7, 8.)

Thirdly, The word of Christ should be *highly esteemed* by us. It should dwell in us *richly* by informing our judgments, transforming our hearts, and reforming our lives. All now have easy access to it, by the translation of the Bible out of the original tongues: Our Father's will is made known to us in our mother-tongue. The word of Christ is a *tree of knowledge*, and thanks be to God that it is not *forbidden:* Yea, it is a *tree of life*, which we may eat the fruit of, and live forever. Here is no flaming sword to guard the way of it, but there is one to pierce through those who despise it. We should not only look into our Bibles in the house of God, but we ought to read them in our families, and closets; if we expect to reach the haven of glory, we should daily steer by this compass, for we are in danger of being swallowed up in the quicksands of carnal delights, or suffering shipwreck on the keen pointed rocks of worldly disappointments.

Fourthly, That we should *apply* the word of Christ to ourselves. It should dwell in us not only *richly*, but *in all wisdom*. Many have the word of Christ dwelling in them only in speculation; they read it merely to furnish themselves with matter for conversation, but are quite strangers to that divine wisdom which teacheth to apply what is therein written. But we should consider, in the most serious manner, that God speaks to us in his word. The *promises* are breasts of consolation which we ought daily to suck; the *precepts* are a rule which we ought constantly to observe; and the *threatenings* should alarm us when we fall into sin. The greater part of mankind conduct themselves as if they were not addressed by

God's word; they are elevated with the promises, and terrified with the threatenings of those of their fellow mortals, who are in exalted stations of life; but the promises and threatening of the Lord God do not affect them, because they do not apply them. "Therefore they say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit shall we have if we pray unto him?" (Job xxi. 14, 15.) Where Christ's word dwells richly in all wisdom, it will be found to be a guest that will pay well for its lodging; where it is applied by faith, it will produce the most salutary effects, grace will flourish, and others be refreshed with its fragrancy; for it will excite us to "teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs." This brings me to the

II. Head, which was to explain the way that we are to evidence "the word of Christ dwelling richly in us in all wisdom," viz. "by teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs."

We come now to tread on disputed ground, yet we need not fear to venture on it, while we have scripture, and the suffrages of eminent divines, to direct our path. But before we come to speak particularly on this head, it will be necessary to explain the terms, *psalms*, *hymns*, and *spiritual songs*. And for this end, let us produce the sense in which these terms are understood by different interpreters, (whose authority will have considerable weight with some,) by which it may appear, that our view of them is not singular, and if we have departed from their genuine meaning, it is not in despicable company.

Hierom thus explains the words, "Psalms may belong to moral things, which we ought to practise," as Psal. xxxvii. &c. "Hymns may belong to sacred things, what we ought to meditate on, and contemplate, as the power, wisdom, goodness, and majesty of God," as Psalms cxxxv. and cxxxvi. &c. "Spiritual songs may belong to natural things, what we ought to debate and discuss, viz. the rise, order, harmony, and continuance of the world and God's infinite wisdom manifested in it," as Psal. civ.

Some divines are of the opinion that our apostle useth the words *psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*, to answer the Hebrew distinction of psalms, which is as follows: 1. Some psalms were called Mizmorim, which treated of various and different subjects. 2. Others were denominated Tehillim, which only mentioned the praises of the Most High. 3. The Jews called other psalms Shirim, which were songs more ar-

tificially composed, and some observe were sung with the help of a musical instrument.*

Dr. Edwards gives the following explication of the words: "*Psalms* is a general term of great latitude, and is a word in common for all those songs which contain in them the praise of God, and set forth in general his sacred attributes or perfections, and in any way express devotion, or contribute to piety and holiness: Such were the psalms of David wherein God is extolled and magnified, and where likewise there are penitential confessions, supplications, and commemorations of divine mercies, and pathetic and devout prayers, and exhortations to a holy life. After *psalms* the apostle adds *hymns*, as a more complete thing, (saith Theophylact, one of the fathers,) because they are of a more singular and peculiar strain, and God is praised from the consideration of his greatness and majesty, his power and glory. *Spiritual songs*, or *odes*, seem to exceed the two former, not only because they are done with more art, and consist of due measures, but because the peculiar subject of them is the goodness and benignity of God: Or more exactly thus, The others set forth the divine excellencies and perfections considered in themselves, and in their nature; but the latter are a displaying of his excellencies as they respect us, and as we have a particular share in them. And these compositions are styled *spiritual*, because they are not only indited by the help of the Holy Spirit, but they flow from a spiritual and heavenly frame of mind, and are sung with great emotion of spirit."†

That eminent reformer John Calvin, whose memory and judgment we ought to revere, gives us his opinion in words to this effect: "*Psalms* are that in the singing of which a musical instrument, besides the tongue, was used. *Hymns* are songs of praise, whether sung with a high voice, or otherwise. *Spiritual songs*, are such psalms as not only contain praises, but exhortations, and other arguments."‡

These interpreters did not understand by *hymns* and *spiritual songs*, as if the apostle intended human composures; neither do they charge him with a needless tautology, as our late refiners do, though no more than the Psalms of David be here meant. But even let us suppose, (but not grant,) that the book of Psalms could not be distinguished into these classes, yet this would not be sufficient to prove human composures

* See Mr. Well's sermon on Eph. v. 19. in the supplement to the morning exercise, page 124.

† Dr. Edward's Theologia Reformata, vol. I. 665.

‡ Calvin's Latin Commentary on the Epistles, page 708.

are here intended; in regard it is no uncommon thing for the Spirit of God to use three words in one verse expressing the same thing: As when Paul says, "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I." (2 Cor. xi. 22.)

We readily grant that there is some difficulty in explaining the distinction of *psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs;** yet we presume, a careful perusal of the Sacred Volume, and observing the sense in which the Spirit of God uses these terms, in other parts of it, will greatly tend to throw light on this subject; for it is a received maxim among the orthodox, *That Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.*

Let us then proceed to enquire at the Law and the Testimony how these terms are used and applied. *Psalms*, in the common acceptation of the word, in Scripture, mean compositions on spiritual subjects, chiefly penned by David, that "sweet singer in Israel;" hence a great number of them bear this title, "A Psalm of David." *Hymns* are applied to part of the Psalms; such as those which celebrate the perfections of God, or such as were picked out for special occasions, as the HALLEL, *those of degrees*, and for every day. Thus the word is used in the history of Christ's celebrating the last passover with his disciples, "And when they had sung an hymn they went out unto the mount of Olives.† How strong is the reasoning, and pious the reflections of that learned antiquarian, Dr. Lightfoot on this passage! We cannot pass over this, without delivering his sentiments in his own words, as they are so very apposite. "What hymn did Christ and his apostles sing? The very same that every company did, viz. the great HALLEL, as it was called, which began at the cxiii. psalm, and ended at the cxviii. No expositor but grants this, and no reason to the contrary; for Christ complied with all the rites of the passover, and started not aside from them in this. Here the Lord of David sings the Psalms of David. What Christ saith by way of posing, 'If David in the Spirit called him Lord, how is he his son?' We may say the like by way of admiration, If David in the Spirit called him Lord, how did he descend to make use of his poetry? What says our caviller now? Set forms are too strait for the Spirit. He that had the Spirit above measure, thinks not so, but useth such.

* Quid differant hymni a psalmis, & quid rursum psalmi a canticis, difficile est certa definitione tradere.—*Calvin.*

† Mat. xxvi. 30. This hymn is thought to be the latter part of the great Hallelujah, consisting of the cxiiith, and the five following psalms; and was usually sung, partly before, and partly after the paschal supper.—*Wait's Gospel History, page* 452.

He that gave the Spirit to compose, sings what he composed. That all-blessed copy of peace and order, could have indited himself, could have inspired every disciple to have been a David, but submits to order which God had appointed, sings the Psalms of David, and tenders the peace of the church, and takes the same course the whole church did."* By *spiritual songs* some understand other parts of Scripture, called songs, besides David's Psalms, such as the Song of Moses, (Exod. xv. and Deut. xxxii.) of Deborah and Barak, (Judges v.) of Solomon, of Zecharias, (Luke i. 67,) and the Lamentations of Jeremiah. But in regard these are not inserted in the book of Psalms, nor do we find that they were sung in the Jewish church, and in regard the Psalms of David contain such a sweet variety suitable to every case, and in the New Testament are called "The Book of Psalms," (Luke xx. 42. Acts i. 20.) which title is given to no other part of Scripture, we humbly apprehend, that David's songs are only intended here. We are not ignorant, that turning other scripture-songs into metre, with a view of introducing them into the worship of God, was in contemplation, but not executed, by the church of Scotland, in the second period of reformation;† and must allow, that if adding these to our psalms, was all the alteration, which is contended for by some, much of our reasoning on this subject would be of no force, and probably our pains altogether spared.

Spiritual songs, we presume, means those psalms which bear the title of *Songs*, as many of them do; the apostle might well call them songs, since David himself did so; one is called "A psalm or song," (Psal. xcii.) another "A song or psalm." (Psal. cviii.) Yea, many of the psalms may be called *spiritual songs*, according to Calvin's explication. They are called *spiritual*, for the reasons given by Dr. Edwards, and because they are opposite to the carnal songs of the profane.

Having attempted to explain the terms in their scriptural sense, we shall now proceed to speak more particularly on this head; and here we are led to make the following observations.

First, That we ought to have a tender concern about one another's spiritual interests. We are required "to teach and admonish one another;" thus to copy after Christ's example, "in having compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way." (Heb. v. 2.) But to perform this much neglected duty in a successful manner, it is necessary, that we ourselves "be full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to ad-

* Lightfoot's works, vol. II. page 1160.
† See an act of Assembly, August 1647.

monish one another." (Rom. xv. 14.) That it really be an *evil* for which we admonish our brother. Eli admonished Hannah for drunkenness, when she was only overwhelmed with sorrow of heart. (1 Sam. i. 14—19.) To admonish a person for a fault of which he is innocent, is like running a lancet into sound flesh, instead of a boil, that never fails to occasion present and after pain. That it be done *seasonably;* sometimes sudden reproofs have struck sinners with conviction, but they often only exasperate. In this age, when people are so much under the baleful influence of pride, if they are reproved in company, they are apt to think, that disparagement rather than reformation is intended, and hence will not hereby be reclaimed. Some will confess these faults in private, which pride will prompt them to justify before a company. That it be performed with *prudence;* this is absolutely necessary for enabling us to distinguish the stations and dispositions of mankind: the apostle Paul gives us a direction, which clearly shows the necessity of this distinction: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren." (1 Tim. v. 1.) We must also consider well the disposition of the person whom we admonish; some are like houses covered with tile, that will not kindle though a firebrand fall on them; but others are like those covered with straw, ready to catch fire by every spark; some like thorns that may be handled without harm, provided it be done with care; but if with roughness, they will fetch blood. "And of some have compassion, making a difference." (Jude 22.) And love should appear eminently in the whole; admonishing a brother, is "taking the mote out of his eye," (Matt. vii. 5,) which must be done with the greatest tenderness; when we lay aside virulence, and admonish with an air of compassion and regard, we will be sure not to gall if we do not gain an offender. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor and not suffer sin upon him." (Levit. xix. 17.) But alas! these are methods little pursued by the professors of religion in this age; instead of them, most people flatter to the face and revile one another behind their backs, which is acting a cruel and unchristian part.

Secondly, That this duty of teaching and admonishing one another is performed by judicious worshippers, in the exercise of singing psalms. This observation arises from the manner in which our apostle expresseth himself in the text; he saith not teaching and admonishing one another *from* Psalms, as in some other places of Scripture, (Acts viii. 35, and xxviii. 35.)

but *in* them. This ordinance agrees in several respects with the reading and preaching of the word, for the book of Psalms contains a great variety of necessary cautions and admonitions, which the pious worshippers in the act of singing direct to each other. In this manner divine grace enables them to enkindle in each other's heart a flame of love; reciprocally they enliven their zeal, and stir up one another to glorify God.*

Thirdly, That singing praise to God is his ordinance in the New Testament church as well as it was in the Jewish. This ordinance seems evident from the very light of nature, and hence it was performed by heathens to their deities.† Such heathens *will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation*, who refuse this piece of adoration to the Lord. This ordinance belonged not to the ceremonial law, for it was celebrated by Moses and the Israelites at their Red Sea deliverance, (Exod. xv,) before the promulgation of this law; and it was esteemed more excellent than any of the ritual institutions; hence saith the Psalmist, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs." (Psal. lxix. 30, 31.) By this ordinance we profess our love to, and confidence in God, yea we acknowledge him as worthy of all adoration; these are duties of the moral law, and therefore must have a place in the Christian church as well as in the Jewish. Much is said in the New Testament to warrant this duty; Christ vindicated the multitude in *praising God with a loud voice* at his triumphant entry into Jerusalem; (Luke xix. 37, 39,) he and his disciples sang *an hymn* at the celebration of the last passover; (Mark xiv. 26.) "Paul and Silas, at midnight, prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them." (Acts xvi. 25.) Add to all, that we have sundry *precepts* which expressly require it: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Ephes. v. 19.) Instead of excess in jollity the apostle James directs us to praise God, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray: is any among you merry? let him sing psalms." James v. 13.)

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* The breath of praise mutually fans one another's souls, kindles a divine heat, and blows it up into a flame; and so every one contributes something to another's good, and receives some help from every other.—*Harris on the Excellency of Singing.*

† Plutarch says, that singing and music amongst the ancient Greeks, were wholly employed in the worship of their gods; and laments their profanation and abuse in latter times, when they were brought into the theatre.

It is trifling in the matters of God to allege as some do, that this duty is recommended only to them who are *merry;* for then it would follow that prayer is a duty pointed out only to them who are *afflicted.* It is no less absurd in others to insist that singing the praises of God in christian worship should be as well laid aside as musical instruments. The reason is plain, because the former is a duty of the moral law, whose obligation can never be cancelled, the latter of the ceremonial, which is now abrogated. Neither does it appear that these instruments of music were used in the synagogue, which resembled the manner of worship performed in christian assemblies much more than the temple service did. Moreover, it might as well be alleged, that the exercise of prayer should be laid aside in New Testament worship since we offer not incense which accompanied it in the temple. (Luke i. 10.) But finally, it is a mere sophistical objection against this duty—That in prayer we confess ourselves guilty of some of these sins which we were praising God for pardoning immediately before. Surely we may sing what does not immediately belong to our case, and may praise God for redeeming others from the sins under which we yet groan; this may strengthen our faith in the redemption from our sins also, and excite us highly to esteem this glorious privilege. But objections of this kind do not properly fall under our consideration in this discourse; we therefore proceed to observe,

Fourthly, That the *psalms, hymns* and *spiritual songs* which are contained in the book of Psalms, were all wrote under the influences of the Holy Ghost, as a spirit of inspiration. They are a stream flowing from the same fountain of goodness, with the other parts of divine revelation.—A stream which for many ages has been running for the refreshment of the Lord's vineyard. *They* bear the same signatures of divine revelation which are stamped on all the parts of sacred scripture. Yea, though all the parts of God's word are so very illustrious, like the rays of the sun, that it would be dangerous to attempt drawing a line of distinction between them; yet such excellency and sweetness has the book of Psalms,* that Luther used to call it "The little Bible and summary of the Old Testament." How excellent and sweet is this book which draws us from converse with men and things, by directing us to communion with God in his sanctuary, and to solace our souls in himself! This is to be in the mount with God, and we do not understand ourselves aright if we do not say with the disci-

* Licet omnis Scriptura divina Dei gratiam spiret; precipue tamen dulcis psalmorum liber.—*Ambrose.*

ples, "Lord it is good for us to be here." (Matt. xvii. 4.) No book of Scripture is more helpful to the devotion of saints than this; it has been so in all ages since ever it was written, and the several parts of it are addressed *to the chief musician* for the service of the church. Instead of excluding any part of David's Psalms from the worship of God, we should rather with pleasure reflect, that in singing them, we offer to God the same praises which were offered to him in the days of David and other godly kings of Judah. Yea, such perfection is in these sacred poems, that they never will turn thread-bare; and so replete are they with comfort, that they can never be exhausted.*

Fifthly, That in singing the Psalms of David, it was never intended we should apply every passage of them to ourselves. If this observation is not attended to, we cannot sing *with understanding*, yea, many places we cannot sing at all; and the Jewish church could not otherwise have sung with propriety. Sometimes the passage may not suit our age; as "I have been young and now am old," &c. (Psalm xxxvii. 25.) In other places frames opposite to ours may be expressed, as when one rejoicing in the Lord sings, "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me. While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted." (Psalm lxxxviii. 7. 15.) Nor can we in the literal sense apply these passages which respect the Mosaic institutions: "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." (Psalm cxviii. 27.) The rule to guide us in singing many of David's Psalms is: That we sing them with the same frame of mind in which we ought to read them, and express these acts of faith which are agreeable to the gospel dispensation. Sometimes we are to consider the subject matter of them, as containing an account of these providences, which we are liable to, rather than these we are presently under; and to improve them so as to excite those graces which ought to be exercised in like circumstances, when it shall please God to place us in them. And indeed if this rule is not admitted, many of the psalms must be excluded from being read as well as from being sung in the worship of God; for the same devout affections are necessary for the one which are for the other.

Sixthly, That the "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" which the Holy Ghost has indited, and not human composures, should alone be the subject matter of our praises. This being the leading truth we proposed to establish by this discourse, we crave your patience while we offer the following things for its illustration.

* See Mr. Henry's Preface to his Commentary on the Book of Psalms.

1. There are various passages in the book of Psalms, which seem to show that it was intended by the *Spirit* for New Testament times. Hence the Psalmist saith, "I will praise thee forever, because thou hast done it." (Psal. lii. 9.) "But I will declare forever, I will sing praises to the God of Jacob." (Psal. lxxv. 9.) "We will show forth thy praises to all generations." (Psal. lxxix. 13.) "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever, with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations." (Psal. lxxxix. 1.) "This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." (Psal. cii. 18.) "I will extol thee, my God, O King, and I will bless thy name for ever and ever."* Not only so, but there are psalms which seem to have been penned with a direct view to the times of the Messiah, as when his life, (Psal. lxix,) death. (Psal. xxii.) resurrection, (Psal. xvi. 10,) and ascension, (Psal. xlvii. 5, and lxviii. 18.) are spoken of as events already past. One of the Psalms is almost repeated in the New Testament,† another is quoted and applied to the state of the Christian church at that time,‡ and the prophets spake of *songs of praise* being offered to the Lord by the Gentiles when brought into a church state. "From the uttermorst parts of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous." (Isa. xxiv. 16.) "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the Islands," (Isa. xlii. 11, 12.)

2. We have no command in the *New Testament* for altering the *Psalms of David*, under the pretence of making them more suitable to Christian worship; or to compose others to be put in their place. To turn the Psalms into metre is not altering their meaning more than a just translation of the *Old and New Testament* is a new Bible. In the light of divine revelation, we may presume to say, that had Christ the alone King and head of his church deemed the Psalms of David unsuitable for that worship which he has instituted in her, he would have directed his apostles to accommodate these unto her spiritual nature, or inspired those men to write in their

* Psal. cxlv. 1. (Here the judicious Mr. Henry thus comments): "I will bless thee for ever and ever." This intimates, 1 That he resolved to continue in the work to the end of his life, throughout his *ever* in this world. 2. *That the Psalms he penned should be made use of in praising God by the church to the end of time.* (2 Chron. xxix. 30.)

† Viz. Psal. xcv. repeated in Heb. iii. and iv. chapters.

‡ Psal. xliv. 22. cited Rom. viii. 36.

stead other psalms which breathe more of the spirit of the gospel; and they in writing so much against retaining ritual observances would have hinted something about the impropriety of singing these *Psalms*. But so far is it from any of these being the case, that we find the Apostles highly esteemed and frequently quoted *the Psalms as the oracles of God.* And nothing is to be admitted into his worship but what has the sanction of his divine authority. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mat. xv. 7.) "As Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." (Heb. viii. 5.)

3. We have no example in the New Testament, to authorize that alteration in the Psalms of David which is contended for. We must allow, that Scripture examples carry with them sometimes the weight of a command: Hence our grand authority for observing the Sabbath on the first day of the week, is derived from the practice of the Apostles, and first Christians who statedly met together for public worship on that day: But no such example can be produced for altering the Psalms. We have already attempted to show that the *hymn* which Christ and his Apostles sang at celebrating the Passover and the Lord's Supper, was part of David's Psalms; and that these are only intended by *the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*, which are mentioned in the epistles of Paul.*

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* The sentiments of the laborious Mr. Baxter are so much to our purpose we cannot pass them by: they are so convincing that they must have weight with all; and we would hope that they will have great authority with those who are agreed with him in his latitudinarian notions of church-communion and his doctrines of the gospel being a new law, requiring faith and repentance as the conditions of it: In his Ecclesiastical Cases of Conscience, Quest. 124. is proposed thus:

"*Is it lawful to use David's Psalms in our Assemblies?*

"*Ans.* Yes. 1. Christ used them at his last supper, as is most probable; and he ordinarily joined with the Jews that used them, and so did the Apostles.

"2. It is lawful to read or say them, therefore also to sing them, for saying and singing difference not the main end.

"3. They are suitable to our case, and were the liturgy of the Jewish church, not on a ceremonial account, *but for that fitness which is common to us with them.*

"4. We are commanded in the New Testament to sing psalms; and we are not commanded to compose new ones; nor can every person make psalms who is commanded to sing psalms. And if it be lawful to sing psalms of our own or our neighbor's making, much more of God's making by his Spirit in his Prophets.

"*Object.* They are not suitable to all our cases, nor to all the Assembly.

"*Ans.* 1. We may use them in that measure of suitableness to our cases which they have. You may join with a man in prayer, who expresses half of your wants, though he expresses not all. Else you must join with no man in the world.

"2. If ungodly men are present when the faithful speak to God, must we not speak our proper case because they are present? The minister in church administrations speaketh principally in the name of the faithful, and not of hypocrites.

We are not unacquainted here that some do plead, that David's Psalms are made more agreeeable to the spirit of the gospel when they are cited in the New Testament.* They must be ignorant indeed, who cannot account for this alteration in another manner. The idioms of the Hebrew and Greek languages considerably differ; and the more literal the translation is from the one language into the other, the greater will be the alteration in words. Moreover the quotations from the Old Testament which we have in the New, were taken from the Septuagint translation, then generally read in the Jewish synagogues, because best understood. But if this exception has any weight, it is in favor of altering the Old Testament altogether, and adapting it also more to the spirit of the gospel; for the same liberty is taken in quoting it in the New Testament,† as is used with the psalms; and thus we shall have a new Bible, suitable for our new Psalm book.‡ And indeed something of this kind is already attempted with regard to the New Testament.§ To deter from all such presumptuous attempts, the canon of Scripture is shut up with awful solemnity. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are

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Must he leave out of his prayers all that is proper for the godly, merely because some wicked men are there? No more must the church do in singing unto God.

"3. They that cannot speak every word in a psalm just as their own case, may yet speak it as instructive; otherwise they might not sing or say it.

"But the sectarian objections against singing David's Psalms are so frivolous, that I will not tire the reader with any more."—*Baxter's Practical Works*, vol. I. page 672.

* Psal. cxviii. 26. is cited Luke xix. 37, 38. Psal. ii. 2, 3, cited Acts iv. 23, 24.

† See Luke iv. 18, 19. Acts vii. with Henry's observation on ver. 1. also chap. viii. 32. 33.

‡ "We come now to the matter to be sung. There are very few who allow singing to be an ordinance, that will deny it to be our duty to sing the Psalms of David, and other spiritual songs which we frequently meet with in Scripture. Some indeed have contested the expediency of a Christian Assembly's making use of several Old Testament phrases, that are contained therein: And others have alleged, that the phrase ought to be altered in many instances, (especially in those which have a peculiar reference to the psalmist's personal circumstances,) and others substituted in their room; which are matter of universal experience. But this argument will appear to have less weight in it; inasmuch as all the arguments, that are brought in defence of making these alterations in the Book of Psalms, as they are to be sung by us, will equally hold good, as applicable to the ordinance of reading them, and it may be will as much evince the necessity of altering the phrase of Scripture, in several other parts thereof as well as in these. For it will follow from thence, that if some psalms are not to be sung by a Christian Assembly, in the words in which they were at first delivered, and consequently are not to be read by them; because the phrase thereof is not agreeable to the state of the Christian church; and therefore it is to be altered when applied to our present use; the same may be said concerning other parts of Scripture; and then the word of God, as it was at first given to us, is no more to be read, than to be sung by us."—*Ridgley's Body of Divinity*, page 572. Glasgow edition.

§ The book referred to is, Harwood's liberal translation of the New Testament.

written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) Amidst the many attempts made to weaken the authority of Scripture, and the schemes which have a tendency this way, it is consolatory to reflect on our having God's promise, that his word shall never be destroyed, or any part of it lost. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Mat. v. 18.)

4. The Psalms of David are a blessed mean of edification to the church of Christ, and therefore it is dangerous to attempt making alterations in them. We may expect the blessing of God on what his Spirit has indited, and none can tell the number of men and women to whom the Lord has blessed this part of his word for their edification. The *psalms* have been sung and read with great devotion in all ages of the church; the words of the prophet have to some been like fiery darts which wound the soul, and then like balm which communicates a divine sweetness and healing virtue thereunto.* They have been a mean of comforting the people of God in their greatest discouragements. When the good but timorous Melancthon was cast down with the gloomy aspect of things, at the dawn of the Reformation, the renowned and heroic Luther used to cheer him up and said, "Come let us sing the forty-sixth psalm, and let earth and hell do their worst." Yea, they have been sung with the greatest emotion of spirit by the martyrs, when encountering death in all its horrors. These heroes of our religion, like the dying swan, did sing in the most melodious manner at their death; and their triumphant singing the Psalms of David, was immediately succeeded by the Song of Moses and the Lamb.

5. To dispute the propriety of singing the Psalms of David in christian worship, is deviating from *the footsteps of the flock*. It is true, the practice of the christian church in the first ages of christianity, lies in a great measure hid in the impenetrable shades of antiquity; yet we may learn from the page of history, that her external peace, and connections with this world, by too natural a consequence, gradually led her from her original purity and simplicity; this need not surprize us, when within half a century past, we see such an al-

* Augustine, in his retirement before his baptism, used to read and sing the Psalms of David in this manner, and they had this desirable effect.—*See the lives of the primitive fathers*, page 479.

teration in the religious profession and practice of *some churches.* However, it appears that the fathers did not deem the Psalms of David unsuitable for christian worship, in regard they sang them, and spake so pathetically in their behalf: Witness what Athanasius (who lived in the fourth century) wrote of them, "That this book refers to all the histories of the Old Testament, that it includes all the prophecies of Jesus Christ, that it expresses all the opinions we ought to have, that it contains the prayers that should be made, that it compriseth all the precepts of morality." He observes further, "That there are some psalms historical, some moral, some prophetical, besides those which consist of prayers and praises. He shews that the psalms represent to every one of the faithful the state of his own soul, that every one may see himself there represented, and may observe from the different passions there expressed, what he feels in his own heart, and that in whatever state any one is, there he may find words suitable to his present disposition, rules for his conduct, and remedies for his troubles."—He would not have any of the words of the psalms, which may appear simple, changed, under pretence of making them more elegant.* Another of the fathers, who was a cotemporary with Athanasius, thus expresseth himself, "The Book of Psalms is a compendium of all divinity; a common shop of medicines for the soul; an universal store-house of good doctrines, profitable to every one in all conditions."†

We must yield to the current of ancient history, that in the course of three centuries, human composures were sung in the worship of God, as well as David's Psalms;‡ but these were concomitants, if not sources of that corruption,§ which did considerably accelerate that deformation in the church, which brought forth *the whore of Babylon.* To plead for human composures being admitted into the worship of God from their being used in the ancient ages of Christianity, will equally conclude in favor of instrumental music, which was admitted about the same period.‖ A time of deadness in religion is the ordinary period of a church's declension from the purity of her worship: Men then forgetting the command of God, think

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* Du Pin's History of Ecclesiastical Writers, Vol. II., pages 45, 46.

† Basil on Psal. i.

‡ Tertullian writes, That after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, every one sung an hymn out of the Bible, or of his own composing.

§ Paulus Samosatenes appointed women on Easter day, in the middle of the church, to sing psalms in his own praise. Act. concil. Antioch. apud Euseb. lib. vii. c. 39. p. 281.

‖ See Broughton's Historical Dictionary, in the article Psalmody.

of gratifying their own fancies. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 3.) This is a favorable juncture for the devil to exert himself, when a church is in a slumbering condition. "But while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." (Mat. xiii. 25.)

The Psalms of David were universally sung in all the Protestant churches in Europe, till they began to decline from their *original purity;* and in such of them as *human* composures are admitted to be sung in *public worship*, it is not on this foot that *David's Psalms* are unsuitable for New Testament times. The advocates for massacring David's Psalms when it serves a purpose give them many fine appellations, and declare that they read them as a sacred treasure of instruction more than any book in the Old Testament; but this only resembles the crocodile's tears, or like "Joab asking Amasa if he was in health, and while he took him by the beard to kiss him, he smote him under the fifth rib that he died." (2 Sam. xx. 9, 10.) Severing from David's Psalms such parts as the variable humors of men shall deem unsuitable for gospel worship, is the way to give the whole a deadly blow; like cutting a living creature in two, each part will seem at first to preserve some remains of life, but in a short time both will totally expire. We cannot finish this point better than by adopting the words of a learned and ancient commentator. "David by manifold *psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, set forth the praises of God, his own faith in his word, exercise and delight in his law, with narrations of God's former and present mercies, and promises of future graces to be fulfilled in Christ; whom he (being a prophet) knew that he should be of the fruit of his loins, concerning the flesh, and should sit upon his throne; whose incarnation, afflictions, death, resurrection, ascension, and eternal glorious kingdom and priesthood, he sang by the spirit, with such heavenly melody as may not only delight, but draw into admiration every understanding heart, and comfort the afflicted soul, with such consolation as David himself was comforted of the Lord. And these his Psalms have ever since by the church of Israel, and by Christ and his Apostles, and by the saints in all ages, been received and honored as the oracles of God, cited for confirmation of true religion, *and sung in the public assemblies as in God's tabernacle and temple, where they sang praise unto the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the Seer.*"*

* Ainsworth's Preface to his Annotations on the Book of Psalms.

6. To alter the Psalms of David from their original sense; or to substitute human compositions in their room, *in Christian worship*, is productive of *dangerous consequences*. Allow me to point out a few of these, and leave your own minds to suggest many more:

1. This has a tendency to weaken the authority of David's Psalms. It is natural for people to have a light opinion of the Psalms when they hear them branded with a number of contemptuous epithets.* Will any be much awed by what is opposite to the spirit of the gospel? But objections of this sort equally strike against all the Old Testament, and have a native tendency to strengthen the cause of Deism. What is said against the Psalms of David is spoken against "the Holy Ghost who spake by the mouth of David." (Acts i. 16.) Doubtless it would be employing time and talents to better purpose, in attempting a reformation of many things in the church rather than in the Psalms of the Spirit's inditing. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Psal. xix. 7.)

2. If David's Psalms are to be sung, only as mangled according to the pleasure of men; or if they are to be altogether excluded, and human composures put in their room; none can tell what will be at last sung *in worshipping assemblies*. I speak of those churches in which these things are looked on as matters of indifference; where people are allowed to use what psalms or hymns they please, and thus to act as the children of Israel in the days of the Judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges xvii. 6.) After all the members are severed from the body of the Psalms, some new refiners may be for cutting away part of the remainder, under pretence of their being also unsuitable for gospel worship. Considering the many poets and poetasters in the world, we know what will be sung in place of

* The advocates for new Psalms in order to obtain an exclusion of *David's Psalms* from God's worship ordinarily call them Jewish Psalms. Some of them are blasphemously denominated *David's cursing psalms*—psalms which express only the language of a *fugitive, shepherd, captain, a Jewish king and musician*: *Psalms* which lead us blind-fold over the "river Jordan, through the land of Gebal, Ammon and Amalek, unto the strong city, and thence unto Edom; through the valley of Baca, and into Jerusalem;" there to wait on the court of burnt offerings; confined to the drudgery of "binding sacrifices with cords to the horns of the altar." Psalms foreign to any person but David, and could not even be designed for the stated worship of the Jews. Yea, they are called "weak and beggarly elements."—Such language from the mouths of them who profess to believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only rule of faith and obedience; must appear very strange, and deserves the thanks of Deists.

David's Psalms, if once excluded. The practice already introduced, of ministers' composing *hymns* which comprise the heads of their sermon will more generally spread: Many of us are but poor preachers, but would make worse poets. Heads of families will make *hymns* and *spiritual songs*, which they may reckon suitable to the state of their families. In one church we shall have one set of such songs, a different one in another: Our *Psalms and Anthems* will at last become more voluminous than our Bible, and more frequently read, which is already become lamentably true, with respect to some *deluded Sectaries*. Such disorders began even in the apostolic age and were corrected by the apostle Paul. "How is it then brethren? When you come together, every one of you hath a Psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation."*

3. This has a tendency to introduce error into the worship of God. The second commandment requireth us to keep the ordinances of God *pure and entire:* While we abide by the Psalms of David we shall effectually secure purity of worship in respect of praising God: But if once we begin to use human composures in God's worship, we are in imminent danger of being gradually led to sing mere jargon, or men's

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* 1 Cor. xiv. 26. To illustrate the danger of such alterations as we now treat of, take an extract from an invaluable sermon entitled the TRUST, delivered at the opening of the Synod of Mers and Tiviotdale by Mr. Wilson,—a sermon which we wish was more generally known than it is in the American colonies. "If man's wisdom be once allowed to add or alter so much as one loop or pin, it will never be easy, or at rest—without the whole tabernacle be *new modelled* according to *the pattern* in his own head. And one cannot tell what may be the consequences of, nor how much the Lord may be displeased with a very small variation from the pattern showed in the mount. The bearing of the ark upon a new cart, was as harmless and extrinsic an innovation as people could readily fall upon in reference to the house of God; yet was it met with a very sensible token of the Divine jealousy. Nor will good meanings and designs be sustained as any whit of an apology for such officious services: It is but a cold reception they get, namely, 'Who hath required these things at your hands? For I commanded them not, nor came it so much as into my mind.' As the zeal of God's house consumed our Lord himself, and the typical David, both of them, so ought the same spirit to be in all his ministers specially: They ought to do what in them lies by reformation and a spiritual impartial exercise of discipline to purge the house of God, 1 Tim. v. 20, 21. Tit. i. 15, and ii. 15, and to watch and withstand from entering into it, all such persons and things, as in the *book of the manner of the house* leave us warrant to be there. For to them hath the Son, who is *over his own house* committed in *Trust* the ordinances and order of it, with a solemn charge *to keep them pure and entire*, without any the least addition, or subtraction, mixture or exchange of one thing for another. Therefore all such, be who they will, though they were even *Kings or Parliaments* who would set up their *posts by God's posts*, or their *threshold by his thresholds* to the defiling of his house, and of his holy name, they must withstand. Ezek. xliii. 8. Observable is that word: *For if thou lift up thy tool upon it* (viz. the stones of God's altar to hew, polish or make them more sightly) *thou hast polluted it.* Exod. xx. 25."—Pages 28, 29.

opinions, instead of the sacred truths of the Spirit's inditing. This is already verified in the case of some deluded enthusiasts, who, instead of reading the Scripture, or singing the Psalms of David with gravity, always sing such hymns and spiritual songs as breathe their own notions, and are inflamed with their own wild fire. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out a fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." (Lev. x. 1, 2.) Could it be made appear that David's Psalms are not suitable for every person, we would not think it strange to see men so fond of other composures. But this is so far from being the case, that to use the warm expressions of Gerard concerning them, "They are a jewel made up of the gold of doctrine, of the pearls of comfort, of the gems of prayer. This book is a theatre of God's works, a sweet field and rosary of promises, a paradise of sweet fruits, and heavenly delights: An ample sea, wherein tempest-toss'd souls find richest pearls of consolation: An heavenly school wherein God himself is chief instructor. The ab idgement, flower and quintessence of scripture: A glass of divine grace representing to us the sweetest smiling countenance of God in Christ; and a most accurate anatomy of a Christian soul, delineating all its afflictions, motions, temptations and plunges, with their proper remedies."*

4. Add to the whole, that the danger must be greatly increased, when congregations themselves are allowed to make alterations in their Psalms. This is too well known to have taken place already, is acting a part opposite to presbyterial government, and may produce a train of more direful consequences than the abettors of it are aware. The supreme judicatory of the church is only invested with the power to "Set down rules and directions for the better ordering the public worship of God and government of his church.†" However, we are far from pleading that church judicatories have any authority to model the worship of God as they please: the power with which they are clothed is not legislative, but min-

* This is quoted in that part of Robert's key of the Bible which treats on the Psalms.

† *Act of Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Aug.* 6. 1641. *Sess.* 14.

"Since it hath pleased God to vouchsafe the liberty of general assemblies, it is ordained according to acts of assembly at Edinburgh, 1639, and at Aberdeen, 1640: That no novation in doctrine, worship or government, be brought in or practised in this kirk, unless it be first propounded, examined or allowed in the General Assembly, and that transgressors in this kind be censured by presbyteries and synods."

isterial and executive. The version of Psalms which is of public authority in the church of Scotland, cannot with any propriety now be called Rouse's Version, in regard it has the same human authority with our Confession of Faith. We shall not say that it is the most elegant in respect of the style, yet it is acknowledged to excel in what is far more momentous, viz. in expressing the mind of the Spirit.* And while our *religious ancestors* discovered about this a flaming zeal for purity of worship, they proceeded with the greatest regularity and deliberation. It was carefully corrected and amended by the General Assembly of Divines, which met at Westminster;—an assembly the most grave and learned that ever sat in the English nation. Complaint being made of the obsolete version of psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins, the parliament desired this assembly to recommend some other to be used in churches; accordingly they read over Rouse's version, and after several amendments sent it to the House, Nov. 14, 1645, with the following recommendation, "Whereas the honorable House of Commons, by an order bearing date Nov. 20, 1643, have recommended the psalms published by Mr. Rouse to the consideration of the Assembly of Divines; the assembly has caused them to be carefully perused, and as they are now altered and amended, do now approve them, and humbly conceive, that they may be useful and profitable to the church if they are permitted to be publicly sung." Accordingly they were authorized by the two Houses.† But our version comes with the additional authority of the General Assembly of the church of Scotland: It was sent from the Westminster Assembly to them for their approbation, as it was a part of that uniformity in worship which was then intended in Great Britain and Ireland. After being under their serious consideration for several years, as is evident from their several acts relative to it;‡ then it was approven of by them and appointed to be sung in all their churches, as appears from the following act of their commission, "The Commission of the General Assembly, having with great diligence considered

* "The versions which I think come nearest the original, are the New England and the Scots; the latter of which I think much preferable to the former; in as much as the sentences are not so transposed in this as in the other, and the lines are much more smooth, and pleasant to be read."—*Ridgley's Body of Divinity*, page 572.

† Neil's History of the Puritans, vol II. page 214, quarto edition.

‡ See the follwing acts of assembly: An act passed August 23, 1647, entitled "An act for revising the paraphrase of the psalms brought from England." An act passed August 10, 1648, entitled "An act for examining the paraphrase of tho psalms," &c.

the paraphrase of the psalms in metre, sent from the Assembly of Divines in England, by our commissioners whilst they were there, as it is corrected by former General Assemblies, Committees from them, and now at last by the brethren, deputed from the late Assembly for that purpose; and having examined the same, do approve the said paraphrase, as it is now compiled; and therefore, according to the powers given them by the said Assembly, do appoint it to be printed and published for public use; hereby authorizing the same to be the only paraphrase of the psalms of David to be sung in the kirk of Scotland; and discharging the old paraphrase, and any other than this new paraphrase, to be made use of in any congregation or family, after the first of May in the year 1650: And for uniformity in this part of the worship of God, do seriously recommend to Presbyteries, to cause make publication of this act, and to take special care that the same be timeously put in execution, and duly observed"* The uncommon pains that were taken by these venerable reformers, inthe introduction of this version into the churches, must set in a stronger light the evil of a precipitant exclusion of it. The psalms which many contend for are not a version, but only an imitation of David's psalms, and seem as far from being like them, as what Michal put into his bed, when Saul sought to kill him; "even an image with a pillow of goats' hair, and covered with a cloth." (1 Sam. xix. 13.) But it is time for us to proceed to the

III Head in the method; which was to illustrate the *manner* of performing this duty of teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, viz. by singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.

To sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord, the following things are absolutely requisite.

First, That we are *actually* in a state of grace. It is impossible to sing with grace in the heart where grace is not implanted. They who are interested in Christ by faith can only worship God in an acceptable manner: "He hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) Our persons must be justified, before our services can be accepted. "And the Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offering." (Gen. iv. 4.) But methinks I hear some making the reply, That unregenerated persons should not then sing the praises of God at all.

* This act is entitled, "An act of the Commission of the General Assembly, approving the new paraphrase of the psalms in metre, and appointing them to be made use of in congregations and families. It passed at Edinburgh," November 23, 1649.

This inference is only according to the rules of the devil's logic: for the unfitness of men for their duty, will never excuse them from the performance. And it is a greater sin to neglect it, than perform it even in an unsuitable manner. Better to read the word, pray, and sing praises even in an unregenerated state, than omit them wholly: this is atheism, that is hypocrisy. Though unregenerated men cannot bless God for saving benefits, yet they may for common mercies: The excellencies of his nature, the bounty of his providence, and the offers of his grace, all require returns of praise. Hence all are exhorted to this duty. "Sing unto the Lord all the earth." (Psal. xcvi. 1.) "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with singing." (Psal. c. 1, 2.) "Sing unto the Lord all ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord!" (Psal. lxviii. 32.) In one psalm travellers, prisoners, sea-faring men, and sick people being delivered from their respective distresses, are all commanded "to praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to them the sons of men." (Psal. cvii. 6,–37.) Moreover the confessions of guilt: the supplications for mercy, and deprecations of wrath, which abound in the book of psalms show the mind of the Lord, that even unregenerate persons should sing them, though they cannot do it with grace in the heart. If they who are assured of their gracious state only were to sing the praises of God, few would perform it in our worshipping assemblies. The arguments against unregenerate persons singing the praises of God equally conclude against their reading God's word and praying.

Secondly, That we sing the psalms of David with *some degree of knowledge* of them. We cannot otherwise sing with grace in the heart to the Lord. While the mind is sunk in ignorance concerning what is sung, the affections can never take wing, nor the heart be suitably affected. To sing the psalms without the knowledge of them, is exactly resembling the Papists, who sing in an unknown tongue. We should earnestly seek after the knowledge of this part of God's word. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) To sing the praises of God for our edification, it is highly necessary as in reading his word, that we have a humble dependence on the blessed Spirit for enlightening our minds into the knowledge of them. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psal. cxix. 18.)

Thirdly, That we sing the psalms of David with *grace in*

a lively exercise. Every grace should be exercised according to the matter of the psalm: and the exercise of one grace must not exclude the exercise of another. As every note must be sung in its proper place, to render the music pleasant; so every grace must be exercised to make this ordinance profitable. It is too common for God's children to indulge themselves in groundless fears, overwhelming sorrows, and desponding doubts, while they are negligent to stir up the nobler graces of faith, love, hope, and delight in God; especially when their present circumstances, and the duties they are engaged in, do call for them Worshippers engaged in the work of praise, and exercising grace in a suitable manner, while they are highly acceptable to God, also are a representation of the church triumphant, where their frames always bear a proportion to their songs. To attain this we must endeavor to put our hearts in order before we begin, by meditation on God, his works and word; thus the musician tunes his instrument before he plays. "There was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour, at the opening of the seventh seal," (Rev. viii. 1.) so when we begin to praise God, we ought to make a pause till a solemn awe of the Divine Majesty settles down upon our minds, and our graces be excited to lively exercise. "Awake up my glory, awake psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early." (Psal. lvii. 3.)

Fourthly, That we offer to God all our praises *in the name of Christ.* No other way for our finding acceptance with God; hence it follows in the next verse, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. The best Christians bring much guilt with them into God's presence, and while there, they are in danger of contracting more: This renders it absolutely necessary that their praises be performed in Christ's name. "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." (Heb. xiii. 15.) Our highest praises fall infinitely beneath the excellencies of the divine nature, and as they are our act, are very unworthy of acceptance with God: They stand in great need of being perfumed with the incense of Christ's merits, as well as our prayers. (Rev. viii. 3.) They who see not the necessity of the Redeemer's mediation to recommend their persons and performances to the divine regard, betray great ignorance of God's perfections, their own unworthiness, and the spirituality of the divine law. So that acts of faith in the righteousness of Christ are absolutely necessary while we are paying to the

Lord the tribute of praise: and we have still ground to address him thus, "If thou, O Lord, shall mark iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." (Psal. cxxx. 3, 4.)

Fifthly, That we perform this duty *only to the Lord*. Thus the text runs, "singing with grace in your heart to the Lord." To praise God in obedience to his command, with a view of advancing his declarative glory and to express our supreme love to him, is to do it to the Lord. They who sing the praises of God to manifest their skill in church music, to let their melodious voices be heard, and thus sing to please their own fancies, or regale their neighbors' ears, sing only to themselves. Such worshippers, if they deserve the name, will meet with the divine abhorrence rather than acceptance. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified."*

Having finished what I intended in the doctrinal part of this subject, I shall now make some practical improvement of the whole for a conclusion. Waving many inferences which might be deduced from what has been said, we shall only take notice of the two following:

First, We may see that God is *very careful* of his worship. He has set down the right way of worshipping himself in his word, and has not left this to the wisdom and pleasure of men. "Show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." (Ezek. xliii. 2.) His care about his worship appears in his providing a book of psalms suitable for his church and people in all ages. Men indeed manifest much arrogancy in prescribing other ways of worshipping God, than these which he has appointed; and hereby they highly provoke the Divine Majesty. "In their setting up of their threshold by my thresholds, and their posts by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed; wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger." (Ezek. xliii. 8.)

Secondly, How careful we ought to be, to preserve the worship of God *in purity*. For the sin of corrupting this, God threatens to "visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generations." How careful ought

* Lev. x. 3. It may not be improper here to refer the reader to Mr. Newman's Directions for the duty of singing.

we to be of all God's ordinances, to preserve them in their scriptural purity, when the last command of the Old Testament is, "Remember the law of Moses my servant,—with the statutes and judgments." (Mal. iv. 4.) And Christ's last orders to his disciples were, "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." (Mat. xxviii. 20.) It ought not to be a matter of indifference whether we walk according to the word of God, or the notions of men. The waters of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, might have been as good for washing away the filth of Naaman's flesh, as those of Jordan, yet they wanted the word of divine institution; therefore they could not be used in faith in order to healing, nor could God's blessing be expected on them. (2 Kings, v. 11–5.) Some indeed tell us, that it is a matter of indifference to them, whether the psalms of David or human composures are sung in our worshipping assemblies; yet they show a partiality in favor of these; and therefore this seems only an artifice to pave the way for their introduction. But God is highly displeased with indifference in any thing pertaining to his worship. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. iii. 16.)

This doctrine may be improven in an *use* of *reproof* to the following sorts of persons:

First, Such as do not read nor highly esteem the word of Christ. It is awful to reflect on that open contempt which is poured on the word of Christ by some, and the indifference with which it is treated by others. It is only books of entertainment which dwell richly in the greater part of mankind in this age. Earthly kings count it rebellion when people pour contempt on their proclamations by refusing to give them a hearing: It must be very provoking to the Divine Majesty, to behold the manner in which mankind treat the proclamations of grace in his blessed word. "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you." (Prov. i. 24-27.)

Secondly, Such as exercise *no care* about their *brethren*. Many count themselves under no obligation to *teach and admonish* their fellow men, when they are out of the way of duty; but rather they laugh at their vices and irregularities.

Instead of admonishing with fidelity and tenderness, they say with Cain, that murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. iv. 9.)

Thirdly, Such as do *not perform* the exercise of praise to God. Quakers deny the warrantableness of singing psalms in New Testament times; there are others who will not do it from a principle of pride, they sit in our worshipping assemblies as if they were struck dumb, and seem to think that praising God would diminish their importance, by reducing them in this respect on a level with the praising multitude. Strange that any should hesitate a moment about the propriety of this duty, and yet expect to join eternally in singing *the song of Moses and the Lamb!* Such is the excellency of this exercise, that it includes all duties in it, being a mixture of perfumes arising from them all.

Fourthly, Such as, though they sing the praises of God, regard the music more than the frames of their heart. These do not "make melody in their hearts to the Lord." We would by no means condemn people for paying regard to external harmony; there should be melody in our voices as well as in our hearts, and without this, discord and confusion must ensue. But there is a greater danger of neglecting the frame of our hearts than this. It is the heart God looks to, and we should be most concerned about having it well ordered before him. It is not the voice, but the desire; not the sweet music, but the heart being deeply engaged; not our loud singing, but the fervour of our religious affections, that are music in God's ears.* "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise." (Psal. li. 17.) "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.)

Fifthly, Such as *neglect* to sing praises to God *in their families*. To worship God in our houses seems evident from the light of nature; hence the heathens had their household gods: It is founded in equity that for family-mercies we have family-thanksgiving. The psalmist seems to mark the religious man's door with this inscription, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous, the right-hand of the Lord doth valiantly." (Psal. cxviii. 15.) The primitive Christians were so intent on praising God, that they sung psalms at their meals.† Jerome speaking of Beth-

* Non vox sed votum, non musica cordula, sed cor. Non clamans sed amans cantat in aure Dei. *Augustine.*

† Enquiry into the constitution, discipline, unity and worship of the primitive church. Part ii. page 3.

lehem, where he lived, and which he so much extols in his letter to Marcella, saith, "You could not go into the field, but you would hear the ploughman at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing David's Psalms." Singing psalms made up a great part of the devotion of these christians in the public assembly, more privately in their families, in their retirements in the closet and on their waking beds.* What a pity is it that family religion should be so much neglected in this age? O how beautiful is it for a family to join in the acts of divine worship; the master leading the devotion and singing the praises of God, the servants heightening the harmony, and the children like little birds sweetening the whole with their more shrill voices! A man of God used to say, "This is the way to hold forth godliness, like *Rachab's scarlet thread*, to such as pass by our *windows*." And he farther added, "They do well who pray morning and evening in their families, but they do better who pray, and read the scriptures; but they do best of all, who pray, and read, and sing psalms: and christians should covet earnestly the best gifts."† A very learned Prelate writes concerning the necessity of family religion in these strong terms: "Constant family worship is so necessary to keep alive, and to maintain a sense of God, and religion in the minds of men, that where it is neglected, I do not see how any family can in reason be esteemed a family of Christians, or indeed to have any religion at all."‡ It was the uniform practice among the members of the reformed church of France, to worship God in their houses by singing his praise. As an ingenious writer informs us, "That persons of all ranks sung psalms not only in the churches, but in their families; and no gentleman professing the reformed religion, would sit down at his table, without praising God by singing. Yea, it was a special part of their morning and evening worship in their several houses, to sing God's praises."§ How striking is the similarity of practice among the people of God in different periods and places, when religion flourisheth among them? It is not sufficient for heads of families to worship God for themselves in their closets, but they are to perform it in their relative capacity. They ought to be commanders in the service of the King of glory, after the example of Abraham, of whom he said, "For

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* Hammond's preface to his paraphrase on the psalms.
† Mr. Philip Henry's life.
‡ Tillotson's sermon concerning family religion; in his works, vol. III. page 163.
§ Quick's synodicon in Gallia reformata, vol. I. page 3.

I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." (Gen. xviii. 19.) A commander is not only to do his own duty, but to order all under him to do theirs also. What would a king think of one who would only fight himself, but allow his soldiery to fall away unto the enemy? Surely he would look upon him as a traitor. Let every head of a family, who lives in the neglect of family worship be alarmed with the thunder of these words, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." (Jer. x. 25.) There we find such families ranked with heathens.

Sixthly, Such as pretend that they *cannot join* in singing the psalms of David, because of the many objections which they have against them. Let us now proceed to hear, and attempt to answer these.

It is true, that the objections which are ordinarily produced carry in them such reflections on the ever-blessed Spirit who indicted the psalms, and cast such reproach on the generation of God's children, who in all ages have sung them, that they scarcely deserve the notice of them who believe that the book of psalms is part of canonical scripture. However, we shall not avail ourselves of any forbidding appearance in their general aspect, but proceed to consider them in order.

Objection 1. *Many passsages in David's Psalms, breathe such a cruel and revengeful spirit against his enemies, as is quite opposite to the spirit of the gospel, and therefore other composures more suitable, ought to be sung in the christian church.*

Answer. This objection against David's Psalms was wont to be urged only by Deists, who thereby meant to weaken the divine authority of these sacred poems.* Indeed if these passages were the effect of malice or passion, it could not be admitted that the Spirit inspired them. Some Socinians gloss the matter thus: They alledge that it was lawful under the Old Testament dispensation to hate enemies, and to imprecate the divine vengeance on them. They found their opinion on this verse in the Gospels, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." (Mat. v. 43.) Our Lord Jesus Christ saith not that Moses or the prophets taught us to hate our enemies, but *it hath been said*, viz. by the Scribes and Pharisees, who corrupted the law by their false interpretations, and unwritten

* See Dr. Chandler's review of a Deistical book entitled, "The history of the man after God's own heart," in which the Dr. in a very learned manner, refutes the charge of cruelty brought against king David.

traditions. That forgiveness of injuries in opposition to malice and revenge, was a doctrine which the Spirit of God had taught the Old Testament saints, (and therefore what our Lord Christ has said in the gospels on this head is not new, but an illustration and defence of what was already written) must appear evident to those who attentively peruse the writings of Moses and the prophets. To set this in a convincing point of light, let us from thence select the following passages. "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help with him." (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.) "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian because thou wast a stranger in his land." (Deut. xxiii. 7.) "If thine enemy be hungry give him bread to eat: and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." (Prov. xxv. 21, 22.) "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; Lest the Lord see it and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him. Say not I will do so to him, as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work." (Prov. xxiv. 17, 18, 29.) "If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him, (neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul;) if the men of my tabernacle said not, O that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied." (Job xxxi. 29—31.)

This objection is now found in the mouths of a set of religious professors, who would take it ill to be ranked with Deists or Socinians. Their catholic love is so great, that it overflows the land-marks between truth and error, which our reformers set up. But it would appear to be altogether an inconsistent scheme; at least those who are engaged in a testimony for reformation principles have but a small share of this love; while it embraces those who are drenched in superstition, or carried away with sectarian delusions. Moreover, these pretenders to this extensive love, do not reduce it to practice, more than others, when they receive real or supposed injuries. Happy would it be for them, if they really had attained to such a degree of charity, *as the man after God's own heart* was possessed of, whom they so severely censure. "I delivered him that without cause is mine enemy." (Psal. vii. 4.) "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt with him that

hateth peace. I am for peace; but when I speak they are for war." (Psal. cxx. 5—7.) While people are so deficient of that for the want of which they unjustly blame the royal Psalmist, they themselves stand self-condemned. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou doest the same things." (Rom. ii. 1.)

But in order to rescue the reputation of David from the cruel fangs of these libellers, let the observation already made be carefully attended to, viz: That the Book of Psalms and the New Testament were both indited by the same Spirit. If then the objection has any weight, it necessarily supports a contradiction in our Bible, and makes the Holy Ghost to allow dispositions of soul, under the Old Testament economy, which clash with these required in the New. To wipe off the stain which some mean to fix on David's character, in respect of rancorous resentment against his enemies, sundry interpretations have been given of these passages. Some think that the words are capable of another translation, as when it is said, "Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul. Let them be as chaff before the wind; and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let destruction come upon them at unawares." (Psal. xxxv. 4, 5, 8.) Accordingly they alledge that the words may be put in the future tense, not the imperative mood; thus, "They shall blush and be ashamed that seek after my soul, they shall be as chaff before the wind, and the angel of the Lord shall chase them. Destruction shall come upon them unawares."* As to what is said in the hundred and ninth psalm, some critics in sacred literature observe, that it ought not to be numbered among those psalms wherein David is supposed to throw out imprecations on his enemies, it being only a rehearsal of those curses which his adversaries denounced against himself. But we apprehend the character of the sweet singer in Israel can be defended without the aid of these ingenious methods, by considering him as a prophet, and as a type of Christ. As a prophet he may be viewed as rather foretelling, than wishing for the event, which would inevitably follow on these ways of impiety, which his enemies practised. And this he did from a principle of charity, that thereby they might be alarmed with their danger, and determined to turn to the Lord.—As a type of Christ, he spake of these enemies, as the enemies of God's declarative glory. As he personated the Son of God, he might

* Dr. Hammond's paraphrase on the Book of Psalms.

warrantably denounce the vengeance of God upon his enemies. The hundred and ninth psalm is expressly applied in this manner by Peter, who sets forth the necessity of the predictions in its being accomplished, when he saith, "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them who took Jesus." (Acts i. 16–20.)

We must carefully distinguish betwixt the enemies of God's glory and our own. These we are to forgive agreeable to the directions which we have in both Testaments; but those we are not, for they stand accursed by his law for their open rebellion. To say we do forgive rebels against our rightful sovereign, would argue disloyalty, as well as an usurpation of his prerogative. If we do not attend to this distinction, we shall not be able to reconcile even some parts of the New Testament with others. For though our Lord has said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;" (Matt. v. 44;) yet it is written in other places, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) "Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil, the Lord reward him according to his works." (2 Tim. iv. 14.) "And when he had opened the sixth seal, I saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth." (Rev. vi. 9, 10.) To remove this difficulty we must view the persons whom our Lord enjoins us to forgive as personal enemies, and these in the other passages as enemies to God's declarative glory. Because the injury they did his servants, was not from enmity at their persons, but his cause which they espoused. So that while we are to forgive our personal enemies, we may warrantably pray for judgments on *the beast* and the *false prophet*, being the avowed enemies of God's declarative glory. (Rev. xix. 20.) To all such presumptuous persons as arraign the words of the blessed Spirit at the bar of their judgments, and charge him with inspiring the psalmist with revengeful expressions, we would just say with the apostle, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20.) As the scriptures are a revelation from heaven, it is our duty to submit to their determinations and heartily acquiesce in what is written.*

* The judicious Durham mentions this as one of the sins we commit in praising

Object. 2. *The psalms of David were penned to suit the Old Testament church in her distinguishing peculiarities, and therefore they are not fit to be sung in gospel worship.*

Answ. We readily grant that important truth which is contained in the premises, but by no means is the inference admissible. The apostle's rule for the right improvement of the Old Testament, should carefully be attended to. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. xv. 4.) As the same devout affections are necessary for reading the scriptures as for singing psalms, this objection strikes against that as well as this. Moreover if it has any force with it, this must fall on reading the writings of Moses and the prophets, in God's worship; because they were also adapted to the Old Testament church, and her peculiarities. But in order to dispel the mist in which it is intended by this objection to involve the psalms of David, let us attentively consider the sequel.

The peculiarities of the Jewish church may be arranged under two general heads. Some of them were prefigurations of the peculiar glories of the christian economy; while others having no typical references, served only to distinguish the Jewish church from the neighboring nations, or to display the divine condescension towards her in that immature state. The peculiarities of both kinds are undoubtedly abrogated. But it is strange from hence to infer, that there is an impropriety in using such words and phrases in our psalms as have a reference to them. The objection proceeds upon this false hypothesis, viz. That the words and phrases in the psalms which express these abrogated peculiarities signify nothing more. The peculiarities of the first class not only express the type, but include the antitype, within the compass of their meaning. It was owing to this that they had such a noble tendency to animate the hearts and establish the faith and hopes of the fathers. This observation being admitted, it needs but a short process of reasoning to display the propriety of using them judiciously in evangelical worship, since in several important respects, they belong to the New Testament-church.

Neither is it just to infer from the peculiarities of the second class, the absolute impropriety of using in our psalms the words and phrases which signify them. Christians are surely

God. "Not assenting to and giving God the glory in the acknowledgement of the justness of his severest threatenings, and the most fearful scripture imprecations." *See his exposition of the Ten Commandments, page* 81.

bound not only to celebrate the goodness of God to themselves, but his kindness to his ancient people, and this cannot be done in more proper words than these, which the believing Jews used. Shall the sacred hymns of antiquity be laid aside by Christians, because they abound in phrases which signify peculiarities now superseded? Should they not rather be used with gratitude, and these very phrases be deemed graceful beauties in our gospel-worship, when we celebrate the displays of God's love in these periods, in which the peculiarities expressed by them were sanctified by divine institution? The ancient instances of God's love are most happily expressed in ancient style, and more striking words to celebrate them can not be found, than these used by the Lord's people who were favored with them, and in which they gave vent to their enraptured hearts. Unskilled they are in sacred music, who do not know how to use king David's lyre in singing the honors of divine love in its brightest displays to the christian church. Though we do not admit instrumental music in our churches, yet we see no impropriety in making use of the words "psaltery," "harp," "cymbal," &c. in our psalmody, when it is known they are used in an accommodated sense which can well be supported by scripture-precedents, and the uncensured practice of the church in other cases. Yea, some have thought that these typified not only the joy and exaltation of heart with which God is to be praised in New Testament worship, but also shadowed forth the manner of it, by vocal music.*

As the writings of the Old Testament are a part of canonical scripture, there is a peculiar beauty in transferring their phrases into New Testament worship, although the rites expressed by these are now laid aside. There seems to be a great propriety in our expressing our belief, that the writings of Moses and the prophets are part of God's word, in our sacred songs, as well as in other acts of divine worship, and as a demonstration of that it is necessary to use ancient style in our praising God. Surely there is no impropriety in singing

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* "As for church music, for organs, and the like, these primitive ages were wholly ignorant of them; for it cannot rationally be conceived that in those days of continual persecution or violence, they could either use or preserve them; all that they looked after was to sing in rhyme, metre, tune, and concert, to offer up unto God, the praises of their voices, lips, and mouth, which Clemens Alexandrinus thinks was emblematized or shadowed forth by those musical instruments mentioned in the hundred and fiftieth psalm; where, saith he, we are commanded to praise God on the *psaltery*, that is on the tongue, because the tongue is the *psaltery of the Lord*, and to praise him on the *harp*, by which we must understand the mouth: and to praise him on the *loud sounding cymbals*, by which the tongue is to be understood, which sounds or speaks through the knocking or coition of the lips."

Enquiry into the constitution of the primitive church, Part II. page 11, 12.

sometimes in Mosaic style, while the church is militant, when she in a triumphant state does "sing the song of Moses" as well as of "the Lamb." To banish the style of Moses and the prophets from christian assemblies, is a very awful attempt. It is no less daring to exclude the psalms of David, or any part of them from the worship of God. The practice of the apostles in applying many passages in the psalms to the times in which they lived, in expressing many gospel truths in Old Testament style, and the book of the revelation being almost entirely written in it, are all censured by this objection; but with a triumphant evidence they rise in proof of its absurdity.

Object. 3. *There are so many passages in the psalms of David which are only applicable to himself; that hence it is necessary we should have other composures more suitable to ourselves in New Testament times.*

Answ. Some things already advanced might serve for a reply to this cavil:* But we shall offer our thoughts more fully on this point. If it had any force, it would be as much against the Jewish church using David's Psalms as the Christian; because the same impropriety attended the one, which is said to take place in the other. In an accommodated sense, the Jews as well as we, could only sing such passages as related to David as the "Lord's anointed." Here let us condescend on some of these passages and show the improvement we ought to make of them. He saith, "When I shall receive the congregation, I shall judge uprightly." (Psal. lxxv. 2.) "God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, Ephraim also is the strength of my head, Judah is my lawgiver," &c. (Psal. lx. 6–8.) Our advocates for new psalms produce these and such like passages, with a certain air of triumph, to show the absurdity of singing them. But let us speak a word in behalf of the Lord, who inserted these in "the book of psalms," and directed them "to the chief musician." If absurd in us to sing these, it is no less so to read them in God's worship, for reasons already given. As to the first passage, which relates to David's purpose of ruling with uprightness, when he acceded to the throne of Israel; we observe, that if there is one person in the worshiping assembly, who has a prospect of filling up an important station in church or state, as that these words would be suitable for him, then we ought heartily to join with him in praise, as well as in prayer: and the improvement that all of us are

* See the fifth observation on the second head.

bound to make of this passage is, that in the strength of divine grace we make holy resolutions to fill up our respective stations with the greatest integrity. As to the other passage relating to the psalmist's anticipation of his swaying the sceptre over the dominions of Israel, a wise improvement may be made of it also. In singing it we should express strong acts of faith in God's promise, whatever difficulties are in the way of its accomplishment. David had the promise of God to depend on, for his being promoted to the government of Israel, but he had his way through difficulties, and yet we find him giving his heart vent in the language of exultation: So we having the promise of eternal life to depend on, should firmly believe the performance. One observes on this psalm, "That in singing it we may have an eye to the acts of the church, and to the state of our own souls, both which have their struggles."* Such wire-drawing critics as have taken up this objection, might also tell us with the same effrontery, that in the Old Testament so much is said about Israel and Judah, and in the New Testament, concerning the disciples, the Scribes and Pharisees, yea in both so much said about persons and places as we have little concern in, that therefore all such passages in our Bible should be altered, being unfit for being read in God's worship. All persons who will allow a moment's reflection with seriousness on this subject, must see such modern refinements are only an artful scheme to weaken the authority of scripture, altogether. But every christian who has taken God's word for the *men of his counsellors* well knows, that God continues to speak to him, in what he said to his church, both in the Old and New Testaments, and the Spirit will lead to make a wise improvement of it."†

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* Henry in loco.

† "Objection. *David's Psalms do not suit our conditions: must we tell God it is so with us as it was with David, when possibly it is not so?*

"Answer. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction,' &c. (2 Tim. iii. 16,) and 'written for our learning and comfort.' (Rom. xv. 4.) The psalms, therefore are so. What passage is there in the psalms, but we may some way accommodate to ourselves? Suppose David says, 'I am not puffed up in mind,' (Psal. cxxxi,) and if you find your heart prone to pride, why here is a word then of admonition to you: So that while we are reciting and declaring David's humble frame and condition, we ought to lift up our hearts to God, that he would work the like frame in us: Lord, thy servant David could truly say, I am not puffed up in mind; Good Lord grant me this grace also. Suppose we cannot find in ourselves such a love to God's law, as was in David, Psal. cxix. 97, &c. then there is a word of instruction to us, teaching us what we should do; we ought to pray to have such a divine affection kindled in us to the law of God. So that we sing psalms as we read them, for the benefit and good use we make of them. It is therefore no more a lie to sing them than to

Finally, this objection includes the cavils of some enthusiasts who dispute the lawfulness of singing psalms altogether. These alledge that David's Psalms contain such strong expressions of faith, as profane persons by singing his words, utter abominable lies before God. But this, like most of the other objections, equally militates against the Jewish church making use of these expressions; surely we may sing "the words of David and of Asaph the seer," as well as they did in Hezekiah's days. The Levites and others who joined in singing, could no more apply every expression to themselves, than many in our assemblies. The joyful or sad condition of others, may be matter of song to us: and the mercies of God to his church formerly, should be viewed in some respects as bestowed on ourselves, being members of the same body. In this sense the psalmist saith, "He turned the sea into dry land, they went through the flood on foot; there did we rejoice in him." (Psal. lxvi. 6.) The invention of man seems to be racked to find objections against singing the psalms of the Spirit's inditing.*

Object. 4. *Preaching and prayer are performed in New Testament language, and therefore we ought to praise God in this also: for when we use Old Testament words in our praises, we must affix New Testament ideas to them, and thus we sing not the sense of the psalms, but something very different.*

Answ. In preaching and praying we use Old Testament as well as New Testament language, and are bound by the au-

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read them; by both we recite what God has revealed in his word for our admonition and instruction, &c. And though we cannot make all passages in them our own, by using them for ourselves, and in our own name, asDavid did, yet we may make them our own, by a sweet meditation on them, for our benefit and edification."

Squire Disney's portion of God's people, vol. II. page 704, 705.

"If a mixed multitude may join together in prayer, and particularly if the psalms of David may be read in the public congregation; though perhaps there are many present who do not understand the meaning of every phrase used therein: yet it does not follow that because we do not fully understand the psalms of David, therefore they ought not to be sung by us. We have before observed, that there is no essential difference, especially as to what concerns the frame of our spirit, between singing and reading: therefore it follows that whatever psalm may be read may be sung. He that is not qualified for the latter, is not qualified for the former. The apostle indeed speaks of his praying and singing with the Spirit as well as with the understanding; but the meaning of that is, that we ought to desire the efficacious influences of the Spirit, and press after the meaning of the words we use, either in praying or singing; yet the defect of our understanding, or having a less degree thereof than others, or than we ought to have, does not exempt us from a right to engage in this ordinance. Therefore we are not to refuse to join with those in singing the praises of God, whom we would not exclude from our society, if we were reading any of the psalms of David in public."

Ridgley's body of divinity, pages 571, 572.

* See a judicious answer to cavils of this kind, in Brown's *Quakerism the pathway to Paganism*, being a satisfactory answer to Barclay's *Apology*, page 463–465

thority of God to do so as often as the edification of his people requires it. Therefore there is no impropriety in singing praise to God in Old Testament words. But we affix New Testament ideas to them.—This is a great error in the eyes of our objectors. Certainly a little attention to this point will dispel that darkness in which some mean to involve it. Wherefore let it be observed, that we ought to take in both Old and New Testament ideas, in reading the scriptures of the Old Testament, which have innumerable references to the Christian economy; and this ought to be done with the same propriety in singing the inspired songs of David. It is far from being true, that hereby we do not sing the sense of a psalm by affixing both kinds of ideas to it as the nature of it requires, for we rather sing the full sense that was intended by the Spirit of God, whereas otherwise, we sing a part of the sense only. That we must have ideas in some respects different from the primary meaning of scripture, is evident from our reading the prophecies, concerning the life, death, and glorification of Jesus Christ; we must carry in our minds the idea of these now being accomplished which the Old Testament saints could not, at the time they were revealed. "These all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." (Heb. xi. 13.) In reading the messages which God sent by his prophets to his ancient people, we cannot have the idea of his now addressing them but ourselves in these. Yea, in reading the New Testament we must have different ideas from those, whom many passages in it, did primarily respect. Surely in reading Christ's predictions concerning his own death, the treachery of Judas and the destruction of Jerusalem, we must conceive of these being now past, and not future events. And in reading the epistles we must have different ideas from those, to whom they were at first addressed. It will not necessarily follow, that thereby we mistake the genuine meaning of the scriptures, but rather that we read them in the manner which the Spirit of God intended; and that by affixing New Testament ideas to David's Psalms, we sing them in their true sense and in their full latitude.

Object. 5. *As we have forms both of sermons and prayers, recorded in scripture, yet we do not confine ourselves to them in preaching or praying; neither ought we in our praises to confine ourselves to the book of psalms.*

Answ. It is in vain to argue from the reasonableness of a thing, when the will of God revealed in his word does not au-

thorize it. We have no command or example in the New Testament to make new psalms, as has been already shown.* But we have abundance of passages in scripture to warrant the preaching of the word and praying to God without a form: and no ground to believe that the prayers and sermons recorded in scripture were used as such. We have no promise of the Spirit to assist us in making new psalms, or in altering those already made; but we have the promise of divine assistance in preaching the gospel. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations,—and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world!" (Mat. xxviii, 19, 20.) We have also the promise of the spirit to enable us to pray. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication." (Zech. xii. 10.) Moreover, there cannot be a parallel run between preaching or praying, and praising; because this cannot be performed without a form, but those may, in regard one person only is the speaker. The Spirit of God has not left upon record such a large collection of sermons and prayers as of psalms, nor are they so well adapted to every case; therefore we may easily see that this is only a mere cavil. There cannot be singing without a form, except all were enabled to compose at the same time, by having the same thoughts, and expressing the same words. Therefore it now follows, that either there must be no singing at all, or it must be done by a form, and if by a form, none is equal to that which the Spirit of God has indited: His words and phrases in expressing divine things are the most fit and emphatical. And we may rejoice that we can sing the praise of God, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but* in them which are far more excellent, even these *which the Holy Ghost teacheth.*

Object. 6. *To confine the New Testament church in her praises to the psalms of David is tyrannical, and the same with imposing Liturgies and Homilies on the church.*

Answ. It is exceeding strange that the authority of God, in requiring his church to abide by his ordinances, and to offer these praises which are of the Spirit's inditing, should be reckoned tyrannical. It was owing to the amazing love of God to his church, that ever the book of psalms was composed, and delivered to her, as part of the canon of scripture. Though it belongs not to us, in the management of this subject, to enter on the head of imposing Liturgies and Homilies on the

* See pages, 120, 121.

church of Christ, yet we must observe, that it is very shocking to hear the psalms of David compared with these, which are only of human composure. We are persuaded that many who profess the Episcopal religion, and make use of the Liturgy and Homilies, yet by no means will exalt them to an equality with the psalms of David. To be tied down to the word and ordinances of Christ, in opposition to the doctrines and inventions of men, should not be deemed a heavy burden: Christ's "yoke is easy," and his "burden is light." (Mat. xi. 30.) But we rather think that to impose on the church of Christ, the many hymns, spiritual songs, and anthems which are of human composition, is wreathing a yoke of bondage about her neck, and laying a burden upon her which he has not commanded. He said to the church of Thyatira, "I will put upon you none other burden: But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." (Rev. ii. 24, 25.) Such is the depravity of human nature, that men put themselves to the greatest trouble in following their own modes and opinions, rather than submit to the ordinances of divine appointment. And we find a far greater keenness for these, than zeal for such ordinances of Christ, as they are in the possession of. It is long since some counted it a piece of tyranny, to be obliged to adhere to the doctrine of the scriptures, as exhibited in our Confession of Faith, Catechisms larger and shorter, directory for public worship, and propositions concerning church government; and now the notions of tyranny are screwed so high, as that it is reckoned an infringement on christian liberty to be confined to the psalms of the Spirit's inditing, in our praises. May it not also be counted tyranny to tie people down to the scriptures of truth, as the alone rule of faith and obedience? But we suppose by this time we have tired your patience, and as the other objections against singing the psalms of David in gospel worship are so very trifling, we shall pass them by unnoticed, and shut up this discourse with a few exhortations.

First, Let us all be exhorted to bless God for putting us in the possession of a complete system of gospel ordinances, in their scriptural purity. The ordinances which are dispensed among us, bear evident marks of their divine appointment, and have been handed down to us, at the expense of much blood and treasure.* Gospel ordinances are the greatest blessing which God bestows on a people. "He showed his word

* From the year 1660, to 1688, no less than 1800 persons suffered martyrdom for adhering to the covenanted principles of the church of Scotland.

unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation." (Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.) We cannot be enough thankful for our privileges, and instead of pouring contempt on praising God in the words of David, let our hearts exult for joy, that ever they, with other parts of scripture, were made known to us. It is owing to the distinguishing goodness of God, that we are not covered with Pagan darkness, Popish superstition, or Mahometan delusion. O how little do we prize our privileges! Without the light of the sun, we could not discern the beauty of the creation; so without the light of divine revelation, we would not have seen the chief of the ways of God, even the glorious work of man's redemption by Jesus Christ. "Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke i. 78, 79.)

Secondly, Let us be exhorted to hold fast every part of these ordinances. This is a day of great darkness in the church of Christ, and therefore the danger of their being corrupted is the greater: for when people lose views of the spirituality of God's institutions, they are apt to begin to please their fancies. To hold fast the institutions of Christ, and transmit them in purity to posterity, are duties incumbent on every generation of religious professors; and to hold fast the scripture psalms, and hand these down to the rising generation, are herein included. "We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children." (Psal. lxxviii. 4, 5.) The vigorous struggles of our religious ancestors to maintain the whole system of divine truth in purity, will greatly aggravate our sin in letting any of Christ's truths slip. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led way with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." (2 Pet. iii. 17.)

Thirdly, Let us be exhorted to beware of counting any of Christ's ordinances as little matters. God will honor them who make a bold stand for what is counted little. "And he said unto him, Well done thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." (Luke xix. 17.) Every step of degene-

racy in a church appears at first as a little matter.* A grave divine compares these evils in their first beginnings to the point of a needle, which however small, has a long thread after it; so these draw a train of dismal consequences after them. Innovations in the church at first, wear something of an innocent and attractive aspect, and the direful cosequences are seldom adverted to, but by a few. What some observe of horse hairs lying nine days under water, that they then quicken and turn living creatures, may exemplify the consequences of lesser matters being allowed in religion, without a divine warrant. Indeed it seems to be a new religion which some are taking up with;—a religion which causeth people to treat the principles solemnly espoused by the reformation, as matters of indifference, or rather filleth them with enmity against them altogether. A new religion must have new modes of worship, and hence it is that the psalms of David, which have been sung in the churches of Christ with so much heavenly delight, are now reckoned by many as quite improper for gospel worship. When a people depart from God, and despise the methods he takes to reclaim them, he is provoked to "choose their delusions." (Isa. lxvi. 4.)

Fourthly, Let us who are ministers of the word of Christ, be exhorted to make a bold stand for every part of divine truth. Our ordination vows bind us in the exercise of our ministry, to be *valiant for the truth on the earth.* Let us hear with solemn attention the charge given to Timothy, "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment, without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. vi. 13, 14.) Let us show our love to our glorious master, by endeavoring to keep up the credit of all the parts of his word, in regard there are so many subtle schemes now on foot, to weaken its divine authority. In a particular manner, let us be careful to explain the meaning, and show the propriety of *the psalms of David;* and thus endeavor to prevent their falling into disrepute among the people committed to our charge. "So they read in the book in the law of the Lord God distinctly, and gave the sense, and

* "Well, if they be none of Christ's small things let them go, but if they be one of his truths, will ye call that a small thing? His small things are great things. It might be proven to you, that there never was a controversy since the beginning of the world, even touching the most momentous truths, that was not accounted a small thing while it was occasion of trial."

Livingston's Sermon in the Appendix to his Life.

caused them to understand the reading." (Neh. viii. 8.) Whatever trials we meet with in the exercise of our ministry, whether from open foes or professed friends, let us never think to forsake the banner of the Captain of our salvation, but rather resolve to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. ii. 3.) Satan is unwearied in his attempts to bring the ministers of the gospel into contempt, because they are great enemies to the interests of his kingdom: He thus acts the part of the thief, who aims at killing the watchman, that with greater ease and safety he may get into the house. To asperse the character of ministers, and represent them as men who want by their sacred function only to exalt themselves above others, he ordinarily stirs up persons who have some reputation for holiness that by their influence they may raise a faction. These act as a live bird to bring others into the net. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had in their company "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord." (Numb. xvi. 1, 4.)

"Finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. vi. 10.) To prevent our making *shipwreck of the faith, and a good conscience*, let us daily implore the communications of divine grace. "Now, unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy—To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude ver. 24, 25.)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. JAMES CLARKSON.

The Rev. James Clarkson, like all the first ministers of the Associate Church in this country, was a native of Scotland.

His father, and one of his brothers, were ministers of high standing for piety and talents, in the Secession Church in Scotland. His brother, the Rev. Andrew Clarkson, who was a person of refined manners, and very dignified personal appearance, also possessed principles of unbending integrity, and was noted for his consistent and fervent piety. The following incident in his life is related, as illustrating his character.

Some young men of infidel sentiments, who were the managers of a ball, sent him a ticket inviting his attendance, expecting that he would either treat it as an affront to his religious standing, or pass it unnoticed. But contrary to their expectations, Mr. Clarkson received the invitation with his usual courtesy, and to the surprise of his friends, dressed himself in a manner at once becoming the dignity of his character and not unsuitable to a ball-room, and repaired to the assembly. He conducted himself with much affability and politeness towards all the party, to their no small embarrassment. When it was about the time the *dance* was to commence, Mr. Clarkson addressed the managers in the hearing of the company to the following effect. That having received an unexpected invitation to their entertainment of that evening, he was happy in meeting so large an assembly; and as it had been an uniform practice with him to engage in nothing on which he could not seek the Divine blessing, he hoped, that, as they had already shown him so much politeness, they would extend their indulgence to him in this respect also! He then invited them to unite with him in

prayer, in which he engaged with such solemnity and fervor of feeling as deeply affected many of the assembly, and left all wholly indisposed to engage that evening in their expected revelry. The whole assembly dispersed without a dance.

It is to be regretted that only a meagre biography of Mr. Clarkson can be presented.

It is but seldom, that the life of a gospel minister, settled in a country congregation, and whose only aim is the faithful discharge of his pastoral duties, affords any great variety of incident. But that example which the life of a good man exhibits is always profitable and instructive to the people of God.

The following particulars respecting Mr. Clarkson were communicated by his son, the Rev. Thomas B. Clarkson, who has also now ceased from his labors in the vineyard below.

Mr. Clarkson came to America about the year 1772, or 1773, being the first missioned by the General Associate Synod of Scotland after Messrs. Smith and Rodger. He was called, in the providence of God, to sustain an important part in defending and maintaining the cause of divine *truth*, as exhibited in the Secession Testimony.

He was settled as pastor over the Associate congregation of Guinstown, in York Co., Pennsylvania, shortly after his arrival in this country; and in this congregation he continued to labor with persevering diligence until within a few years of his deccase; when he was compelled to resign his charge, on account of increasing infirmities. He died about the year 1810, or 1811. Mr. Clarkson's congregation was located in that part of York County denominated "the Barrens," where the land is proverbially poor; and his salary never exceeded £80 Pennsylvania currency, equal to $213 and a few cents, per annum; with this, and the proceeds of a small farm, he was enabled to support his family, and devote himself to his pastoral duties; in attention to which he was exemplarily diligent; catechising and visiting his whole congregation every year. He had a stated meeting of his session every month for religious exercises and for inquiring into the state of the congregation, and making provision for the poor. A small fund was kept up by stated collections every Sabbath, for the relief of the poor, whose burdens were in this way very much alleviated, without the knowledge of any, except the session.

"I remember," says Mr. T. B. Clarkson, "that my father seemed to consider this, a matter of some importance, for I recollect of hearing him once in conversation with some clergyman, say, that this would be a condition, without which

he would not accept of a congregation, viz: that of lifting weekly collections for the purpose mentioned."

Although Mr. Clarkson was naturally hasty in his temper, yet, in his session, and also with others, he was persuasive, mild, and patient, and at no time had he any unhappy jangling. He never had an ear for tattlers, but always endeavored to turn their attention to themselves; this generally cut the tale short, and kept him in ignorance of every thing in the congregation, but what would come before the session in a regular way.

In admitting members to communion he was exceedingly particular; this he used to think was one of the most difficult duties he had to perform as a minister, and it gave him the greatest anxiety.

His manner was, to request those who made application and were admitted to attend on the next communion, to converse with him, in order to see whether they had made any attainments in knowledge, and that he might have another opportunity of instructing them as to the nature of the ordinance, and of recommending books for their perusal; accordingly before a communion, in appointing a day for young people to converse with him, a day was mentioned for all those to come who had been admitted at the last communion. This was no doubt one way in which his people were well instructed in Secession principles. With regard to his preaching, he pursued the old and the best plan of expounding the psalm, and lecturing in the forenoon. He might be called a systematic and doctrinal preacher generally. Though he could not be called an elegant speaker, yet he was an interesting preacher; he had an impressive earnestness in his manner, well calculated to draw attention; his enunciation was clear, manly and distinct; and though he sometimes hesitated, he would frequently speak with fluency. All his talents were of the useful rather than brilliant kind. As a man, he was cheerful and affable, at the same time he possessed a native dignity of which he could not easily divest himself—undeviatingly adhering to whatever he conceived to be right, regardless of consequences. Mr. Clarkson was a zealous, faithful and conscientious supporter of the Secession Testimony in America; and his labors seem to have been blessed with unusual success. The Secession Church has now upwards of one hundred and eighty congregations in America, the great majority of which, lie in the United States, west of the Alleghany mountains; and it has been remarked, by those who have opportunities of personal acquaintance in most of those

congregations, that there is scarcely one known, in which some of those, that were members in Guinstown congregation are not to be found. And in many cases, they formed, (if we may borrow a term,) the *nucleus* of the congregation.

Mr. Clarkson was twice married. By his first marriage he left three sons, and three daughters, and one son by the second marriage. The youngest of his sons by his first marriage, he named after his intimate friend and fellow-laborer, Rev. Thomas Beveridge. This son, the Rev. Thomas B. Clarkson, entered the ministry, and was settled at Mercersburgh and McConnelsburgh, Pa. where he preached with much success for a few years; but his health failing, he was obliged to desist from public speaking altogether several years before his death.

SERMON,

BY THE REV. JAMES CLARKSON

(Preached at Guinstown, Nov. 27, 1774.)

"We have an Advocate with the Father." (1 John ii. 1.)

CHRIST is a Priest. We have the oath of the eternal Jehovah to assure us of this truth, (Heb. vii. 21,) "The Lord sware and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." His priesthood consists of two parts, his oblation and intercession: his offering up of himself to satisfy divine justice, thereby reconciling us to God; and in making continual intercession for us. The first of these he long ago perfected on earth, (Heb. v. 14,) "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The last he is always carrying on in heaven, according to the words now read as the subject of discourse. "We have an advocate with the father."

In the 7th verse of the preceding chapter of this general epistle, which is addressed to all those into whose hands the Bible should come, the Apostle informs those to whom he wrote of Christ's blood as an atonement—"and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin." In the 9th verse he discovers to all how they may make a profitable improvement of this blood, namely by owning their sin, confessing their guilt before God, and going to him for pardon. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins."

In the first clause of the 1st verse of the context, he informs them of the end and tendency of this comfortable doctrine; "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not." Seeing that God is merciful and gracious ready to hear the cries and forgive the sins of his people, surely this is a strong and forcible obligation on them to guard against sin which is so offensive and contrary to his nature. But as there

is no perfection in this life, the very best of God's people being subject to many failures that tend greatly to discourage them, the apostle here discovers a proper relief for their despondency. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." Let your failures be matter of deep concern and humiliation to you before God; but be not so discouraged under them as if they could cause a final rupture or breach between God and you. It is Christ's business as an intercessor or advocate to prevent that; "And if any man sin," &c.

Notice more particularly in these words,—*First*, a sufficient remedy or powerful antidote against despondency declared; namely, an advocate with the Father: "If any man sin," &c. An advocate is a person that pleads the cause of another in court: so Christ pleads the cause of his people in the court of Heaven. The word here translated advocate is no where else in scripture (that I remember) ascribed to the Son, though the thing meant by it is frequently ascribed: thus in Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Rom. viii. 34,) "It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." It is also ascribed to the Holy Ghost, (Rom. viii. 26,) "Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

The business of an intercessor we noticed was to speak or plead for another. So we may observe that there is this difference betwixt the intercession of the Holy Ghost and Christ's, that the Holy Ghost speaks for Christ in the heart by discovering and recommending him as precious to the soul, (John xvi. 14.) "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you;" but Christ speaks in heaven for the believer. The Holy Ghost pleads the cause of Christ in our hearts and indites our requests for us; Christ pleads our cause in heaven and presents our supplications there for us. Thus both the Son and the Holy Ghost are advocates in the believer's interest. Christ is said to be an advocate with the Father. Not with *his* Father only, as if believers had no interest in him. Not with *their* Father only, as if he were contradistinguished from them. But with *the* Father: which implies that both Christ and believers have but one Father. (John xx. 17,) "Jesus saith to Mary touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But

go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Hence is he said to be with the Father, set down on the right hand of the throne of God even in our nature; and surely this must be highly comforting to believers.

But, *Secondly*, We have the interest which all true believers have in Christ as an advocate asserted. "If any man sin, we have an advocate," &c. I say believers, because none else are benefitted by him. It is true that the term being indefinite, none are particularly excluded. All are welcome to accept and improve him as an atoning and interceding High Priest, by putting their case wholly into his hands, however desperate like it may appear, or however many and highly aggravated their sins are. But it is only believers that really have an interest in him. They are all particularly included. The apostle does not say if any man, or if every man sin, he has an interest, an advocate with the Father; but *we* have an advocate whom they may come unto and employ for their interest; all who are laden with, and groaning under, a burden of sin as offensive to God, have an interest in Christ as an advocate, and these are believers only. The benefit of Christ's intercession does not extend to one individual more than those for whom he made atonement. (John. xvii. 9,) "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me out of the world, for they are thine." This is an unquestionable truth, a matter of established certainty, and particular ground of consolation to every believer, that they have an advocate with the Father: "And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father."

From these words, thus explained, we observe,

That Christ's advocacy or intercession is a noble antidote against despondency.

The method, which we propose, through divine aid, for discoursing a little upon this doctrine shall be,

I. To inquire a little into the nature of Christ's intercession;

II. Confirm the doctrine; and,

III. Apply.

I. To inquire a little into the nature of Christ's intercession,

1. We observe, in general, that intercession carries in it something of the nature of prayer. This belongs to Christ's intercession. (John. xiv. 16,) "And I will pray the Father and he will give you another comforter." Whether Christ's intercession will be managed vocally in heaven or not, is dis-

puted, and we shall not decide. Our concern is more particularly with the matter than the manner. Yet we rather incline to the negative, on account of the different circumstances that attend his glorious state from his humiliation in the days of his flesh. Moreover words are not judged necessary for communicating ideas to spiritual intelligences, far less to the Father of spirits. Groans and sighs are understood by him; (Rom. viii. 26.) "Likewise the spirit also helpeth" &c.

2. We observe that Christ's intercession with the Father does not imply that the Father does not love his children, or that he is unwilling to communicate blessings to them. No, our Lord says, (John xvi. 26, 27,) "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you." The Father's good will and love towards them are the same as the Son's. The Father made choice of a certain company of sinners from eternity and gave them to the Son to be redeemed. Yea, as a pledge of his love, he gave his only begotten Son, the Son of his love to be a surety and sacrifice for them; and all without any intercession or means used to obtain it. (John iii. 16,) "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." (1 John iv. 10,) "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us," &c.

3. We observe that it is the established order of heaven that the elect shall not obtain the blessings of the covenant otherwise than by the Son's suing for them. There is the highest reason for this order.

(1.) Because God can have no dealings with sinners but through a Mediator. Sinners must know that Christ is the way. (John xiv. 6,) "And Jesus said unto him I am the way." He is the way exclusive of all others: God's only way to us, and our only way to God. The only way in which God communicates his blessings to us, and the only way we present our addresses and return our thanks to him. It is highly necessary that all blessings should be transmitted to sinners through a surety, that they may see a stamp of God's inflexible justice, and of his infinite abhorrence of sin in all the blessings which they receive; and that in all their comings to God, they may remember how unworthy they are, and, how much they are indebted to free grace through the surety.

(2.) The nature of the covenant betwixt the Father and the Son necessarily required this order. Christ undertook the work of redemption, "Lo, I come," &c. The Father exacted the condition of the covenant of him. "He spared

not his own Son," &c. Christ, by his undertaking, became the Priest of the covenant, and behoved not only to atone, but also to appear for his people; not only to obey, but also to intercede for their rights. This necessarily belongs to his office, and so must be fulfilled, otherwise he should not be a priest. Hence says the apostle, (Heb. viii. 4,) "If he were on earth he should not be a priest," that is, if Christ had remained on earth, notwithstanding of his atonement, he could not have been a perfect or complete high priest. He must also pursue his merits as an advocate or intercessor within the vail.

4. We observe concerning Christ's intercession that he appears in the presence of God for us. He represents our persons there by presenting himself in our stead and on our behalf. As the High Priest under the law bore the names of the children of Israel in the breast plate of judgment upon his heart when he went into the holy place, (Exod. xxviii. 29,) thus acting as a public person and representative of the congregation; so our great High Priest bears the names of all his people engraven on his heart, not emblematically but really for a memorial before the Lord continually. Perhaps Christ speaks in allusion to this, (Rev. iii. 5,) when he says that he will confess the names of those that overcome before his Father. When none could undertake so desperate a case as ours was, he interposes and stands forth as our advocate; when we durst not appear before the throne of God, he presents himself in the room of miserable clients, and boldly pleads their right before the awful court of heaven.

5. We observe that Christ not only appears in heaven for his people, but also intercedes by an act of his will desiring that they should partake of all that he has procured for them. So far his intercession above agrees to that prayer which he made upon earth, (John xvii. 24,) "Father, I will that they also whom thou has given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," &c. The Father knows both what we want and what the Son would have for us; and we are sure that it will be regarded and granted by him, for their will or desire is one.

6. We observe that Christ constantly intercedes in Heaven, by presenting his blood as a moving plea before the throne. Hence is he represented to John in a vision under the similitude of a lamb that was slain. (Rev. v. 6.) From this some think that he carries even in his glorified body, the marks of his death wounds; and, also, (from Isa. xlix. 15,) "I have engraven thee on the palms of my hands." Every one of

those marks pleads powerfully and efficaciously on our behalf.

I remember to have read a passage of history concerning two brothers, Amynias and Eschylus, which may serve as an illustration of this. The one had been guilty of some misdemeanor, for which he was accused and likely to be sentenced to death. The other had been employed in the service of the commonwealth, where he was greatly distinguished and acquired high merit. He had lost one of his hands in the field of battle. On the day of his brother's trial he came into court, and, without speaking a word, presented his arm without the hand, which was so powerful an intercession that his brother was set at liberty. We are sure that the blood of Jesus is a sufficient atonement, and is constantly pleaded by him for his people: "And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father." We are sure that Christ went into Heaven by his own blood. (Heb. ix. 12,) "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place." This was typified by the High Priest, under the law in carrying in the blood of the sacrifice within the vail. (Lev. xvi. 14,) "and he shall take of the blood of the bullock and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." The high priest's offering sacrifice was a type of Christ's suffering on earth. (Heb. xiii. 12, &c.) His entering into the holy of holies, was a type of Christ's entering into heaven itself. His sprinkling of the blood was a type of Christ's intercession. His doing it seven times pointed out the perfection and constancy of Christ's intercession in heaven on the merits of his blood: Hence it is called the blood of sprinkling. (Heb. xii. 24,) "And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The blood of Abel cried on earth for vengeance; but the blood of Christ speaks in heaven in behalf of sinners. It is called the blood of sprinkling, as it is powerfully pleaded by Christ there, and the fruits of it demanded to be bestowed on all those for whom it was shed. But we come,

II. To confirm the doctrine, or show that Christ's intercession is a noble antidote against despondency.

1. The truth of this will appear if we consider what it is that he intercedes for to his people. In general he intercedes for all that which his people stand in need of. We formerly noticed, that it is through the channel of his mediation that they have all their mercies. But more particularly,

(1.) Here we observe, that he intercedes for the Holy Ghost

to his people, as the leading fruit of his purchase. This he informed his disciples of before he left them. (Luke xxiv. 49,) "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you." It is the Holy Ghost which is here called the promise of the Father, by way of eminence, as comprehending all the blessings of the covenant. This promise had a remarkable accomplishment on the Apostles at the day of Pentecost. It also still has, and will have a particular accomplishment to every believer, though not in the same manner with the apostles. Yet he is in some way suited to their case, sent as a spirit of illumination and conviction, enabling them to embrace Christ as freely offered to them in the gospel. Is not this a noble antidote against despondency? Yea, he is sent to believers as a fruit of Christ's intercession in the character of a comforter. (John xiv. 16, 17,) "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." Some of you, perhaps, may be ready to allege that you have little ground of comfort from that promise, because he is promised to believers only, and you can make no pretensions to faith. But if it is cause of grief to you that you have not faith, and if you are groaning under a load of sin and guilt, we would tell you that you have a particular and special ground of encouragement in the promise, for it is particularly given to you. It immediately respects those that mourn, and you are warranted to take the benefit of it: this is your encouragement, that "He shall abide with you for ever." He will lead you in the road of duty into all truth. (John xvi. 13,) "Howbeit when the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come."

(2.) We observe, that he intercedes with the Father for the acceptance of the persons of his people. He has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for them, and on that footing he pleads that they may be received into favor with God, yea, brought home to the mansions of glory. (John xvii. 24,) "Father, I will," &c. Having finished the work which the Father gave him to do, he ascended up into heaven to procure acceptance for his people, on the footing of his righteousness, and to prepare a place for them. (John xiv. 2,) "In my Father's house are many mansions.—I go to prepare a place for you." This was by intercession for them, for the acceptance of their persons. It is in this way that they do indeed find acceptance in God's sight. (Eph. i. 6,) "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted

in the beloved." In Christ he sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel.

(3.) We observe, as he intercedes for the acceptance of their persons, so he intercedes also for the acceptance of their duties: not as if their obedience were perfect, not as if it were meritorious of any mercy or favor in God's sight; no, in all things they do offend and come short of the glory of God. God who is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity, will not look upon an imperfect righteousness. But he intercedes for the acceptance of their duties, as they are an honest and sincere acknowledgement, or return of thanks, for the sovereign communication of his grace to them; as an endeavor after holiness or new obedience, as a fruit of union to his person, relying on him for assistance. He intercedes for the acceptance of their duties in God's sight, because they are the effect of the Holy Ghost's assistance and direction. (Rom. viii. 26.) The Spirit directs and guides them in their prayers and other duties; and so far as that is the case, it is the work of God, and so acceptable to him. Christ prays before the throne for the acceptance of these, (Rev. viii. 3.) He prays for their preservation and sanctification in the world, (John xvii. 17.) He prays for an increase in grace and perseverance in it to them, (Luke xxii. 32.) "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." He purchased all the graces of the Spirit for his people, and intercedes for the communication of them to them, to enable them acceptably to discharge their duty. Surely this is a noble antidote against despondency!

2. The truth of this doctrine will appear, if we consider the excellence of Christ as an advocate. Here we shall mention only a very few particulars.

(1.) We observe that he is an authorized advocate. Every one has not a right or title to plead in court, but only those who are vested with a commission or authority to that office. Christ did not intrude himself into this office, but was called unto it in due order by God. (Heb. v. 4,) "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee." His commission to be an advocate for sinners is confirmed by the great seal of heaven, (John vi. 27,) "For him hath God the Father sealed."

(2.) He is a wise advocate. Many good causes are lost among men through the unskilfulness of the advocate, he not knowing how to represent the matter and plead it right before the judges. But this can never happen with respect to any

cause that Christ is entrusted with, for he is endued with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, so that he perfectly knows the most perplexed circumstances of his people. (Isaiah xi. 2,) "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Not only is he intimately acquainted with the causes of his people, but he well knows how to plead them. He knows the manner of the court of heaven, being a member of the council of peace from eternity. He knows the only footing on which they can be successfully pleaded. Hence, says the apostle, (Col. i. 19,) "It hath pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell;" a fullness of merit in his obedience and satisfaction; a fullness of wisdom to fit him for pleading in behalf of his people. For "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He knows their imperfections, wants and necessities. He perfectly understands their prayers, though in broken sentences; yea, he can even interpret their "groanings, which cannot be uttered," for he is very God. "In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," that is, the very nature and essence of Deity, unerring wisdom, almighty power, and all whatever the great Jehovah challenges as his own; all the fullness, every adorable attribute invariably resides or dwells in Christ.

(3.) He is a righteous advocate "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is no small disadvantage even to a good cause, to have a person of infamous character to plead it. But Christ is an infinitely righteous person, being absolutely free from all sin, (Heb. vii. 26.) "For such an High Priest became us," &c. He always pleads a righteous cause, for he pleads for nothing but according to the articles of the covenant agreement. He pleads on the footing of his blood and righteousness, which merited all the blessings of the covenant; and so his intercession is according to the strictest law and justice.

(4.) He is an importunate advocate. He pleads the cause of his people with concern, as a matter that he has really at heart. When a person pleads his own cause, especially if it be of moment, it will be with an ardent desire to obtain his suit. Thus Christ pleads his people's cause most importunately; for his and theirs is one. The church's afflictions are Christ's; his sufferings in his members. Hence does he say to Paul, when going to Damascus to destroy his people, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He has a compassionate concern and sympathy with them in their distress, (Isa. lxiii

9,) "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." (Heb. iv. 15,) "For we have not a High Priest," &c. Having thus a compassionate concern for them, he importunately intercedes in their behalf. (Zech. i. 12,) "Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these seventy years?" He has a constant concern for them, that they may be preserved from the evil of the world. (John xvii. 15,) "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." He importunately pleads that they may be brought home to glory with himself; and this he does in the form of a demand rather than a request. (John xvii. 24,) "Father, I will," &c.

(5.) He intercedes constantly and without intermission. He does not do it as the High Priest merely once a year, but always. When he was on earth he spent whole nights in prayer; but yet that was not then his only work as now it is. In heaven there is never any intermission of his intercession. (Heb. vii. 25,) "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Some, indeed, think that Christ's intercession will cease at the end of time, when the saints are brought home to glory. But we rather incline to think that it will continue through eternity. Indeed, there will be no necessity for Christ's interceding after the last judgment as he now does; he will not need to intercede then for the effectual calling of the elect, for the pardon of their sin, for their progress in sanctification, for bringing them home to glory. No, all these things will then be fully brought to pass; yet we cannot from that infer that there will be no need for his intercession. Though it is said, (1 Cor. xv. 24,) at the end of time, "He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and shall put down all rule, and all authority and power," it will not hence follow that Christ will be no longer a king, or that his mediatory kingdom will then cease to exist, because that the manner in which it is now governed and managed, will no longer continue. No, he will be a king upon his throne for ever and ever. If his kingly and prophetical offices shall continue for ever, (for the "Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters,") what reason have we to conclude that he will cease to be a priest through eternity? We apprehend that Christ's intercession will still be needful

for the continuing of the glorified in their holy and happy state. But how that will be done we do not pretend to know. If the virtue of Christ's blood could ever be exhausted, or its voice drowned through the eternal ages, what security could the saints have for their abode in heaven?

Finally, here, we observe, that he is a prevalent intercessor. The Father's ear is always open to his suit. (John xi. 41, 42,) "He said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always." He is the Father's beloved Son, and they for whom he intercedes are also beloved of the Father. He cannot ask what God can refuse, for his intercessions are always agreeable to the divine purpose. He never asks any thing but what God from eternity purposed to give as a reward of his obedience and satisfaction. Christ's intercession does clearly evince the validity and completeness of his satisfaction. God would not have admitted him to intercede, if he had not fully satisfied. His intercession is just a virtual continuation of his offering; and we can not imagine that God would ever have accepted of it, if it had not been a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor unto him. It is because that he paid our debt as our surety, that he is accepted to plead our right as our attorney. It is because that he is our propitiation, that he is also our advocate; and thus he is always successful and prevalent. His desire is always given to him. (Ps. xxi. 2,) "Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and thou hast not withholden the request of his lips." Certainly a due consideration of these things must yield real comfort to drooping saints.

We come now to make some short improvement of the subject by, *first*, a few inferences for information:

1. Hence, see the error and danger of maintaining a plurality of mediators. The apostle speaks of one only; "If any man sin," &c. (1 Tim. ii. 5,) "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." The Papists cast a vile reproach upon Christ by employing a number of other intercessors besides him, such as the Virgin Mary, departed saints, &c. By advancing and preferring others to the work of mediation, they really charge Christ with being insufficient for that office. But hath Christ trod the wine-press alone, and is he not able to perform the business of intercession alone? Did he redeem us by his own blood, and must he have partners in his pleading work?

This scheme of doctrine tends to overthrow all our holy religion, and subvert every foundation of faith; for if Christ be not sufficiently qualified for, or need partners in, his ad-

vocacy, then certainly we have reason to doubt of his sufficiency for giving satisfaction to divine justice, and so we have reason to question his being the author of eternal salvation! conduct most inconsistent with the character of a saint! It is most dishonoring to God, as it makes him a liar, not believing the record which he hath given him concerning his Son.

2. Hence, see the danger of joining Christ's righteousness and our own together, and depending on that as the ground of our justification before God. Christ pleads only on the footing of his own righteousness, and God is completely satisfied with it. (Isa. xlii. 21,) "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake." It is a doctrine currently taught and as generally believed, that if we do what we can, no more is required of us; Christ will make up the rest. But it is an effectual way to sooth an unwary and unthinking generation in their security, and flatter them with a fool's paradise till they be miserably disappointed by landing in hell under a specious pretext of conducting them safely to heaven. This you may think strange, but it is not the less true. This will appear, if we consider the righteousness which the law requires, namely, personal, perfect and perpetual. This was the righteousness which God required of Adam in the covenant of works. This was the righteousness required in the covenant of grace, for Christ undertook to fulfil the condition of that covenant which Adam broke. Now Christ's righteousness joined with a sinner's or even a saint's, cannot be a ground of that person's justification before God, because it is not the righteousness which the law requires, a personal righteousness, but this is a righteousness of persons. Yea, such a righteousness is it, that God will not, can not justify sinners on account of it, because it is an imperfect righteousness: the righteousness of a sinner when joined to Christ's, destroys both through its imperfection. Our righteousness, our very best works, are but as filthy rags. "And God saw the wickedness of man that it was great upon the earth, and every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually," &c.

3. See Christ's great love to, and concern about, his people. His love appears in his laying down his life for them. (John. xv. 13,) "Greater love hath no man than that a man lay down his life for his friends." Though he is now ascended into the highest, yet he is still mindful of his sheep on earth. He is concerned for them lest they be offended or hurt by the world. (John xvii. 11,) "And, now I am no more

in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are."

4. See the great encouragement that all saints have to go with boldness to a throne of grace. Christ intercedes for the Holy Ghost to them. The Holy Spirit directs them to pray for things agreeable to the will of God. Christ presents their prayers before the throne, perfumed with much incense. He takes a pleasure in hearing his people's prayers. (Song ii. 14,) "O my dove that art in the clifts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely."

5. See proper exercise for downcast christians, particularly such as intend to go to the table of the Lord. Examine into your own hearts and roll all your burdens and diseases over upon Christ, who is the great burden-bearer. People about the time of a solemn occasion, are ready to give way to discouragement and despondency. This is a most unbecoming exercise at a thanksgiving ordinance. They are ordinarily too careless about this exercise, and when they begin to examine themselves on a sacramental occasion, they find very much far wrong, and then they are discouraged. The course which they generally take to rectify matters is as bad as their exercise, if it be not indeed attended with more heinous aggravations. They are sorry for a short time that their deportment has not been more becoming, that they have not been more diligent and pointed in observing ordinances and their duties; and with this pretended humiliation as an atonement, they venture forward to the table of the Lord, not considering that they are wounding him in the house of his friends; not considering that they are eating and drinking judgment to themselves. This is manifested by their conduct afterwards, for in a few days they will return to their former regardless course with the dog to his vomit, and the sow that washed to her wallowing in the mire.

But we would direct you to a different course, namely, to look into your own hearts carefully. The apostle says, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." The word there signifies to examine or search as a goldsmith does the metal in the furnace. So you ought to search into your own hearts with the greatest strictness and accuracy, digging as if to the very bottom, till there be no sin nor lust left. Perhaps, some may say, that their sins are so great and their hearts so bad, that they dare not look into them. They may grow worse, but they never can grow better, by neglecting this duty.

6. Is Christ an advocate with the Father? hence see, that Christ is a divine person. God will not, can not, allow any to intercede before his throne, but on the ground of merits of infinite value. Such are Christ's. They derive their value from the infinite excellence and dignity of his person, and God is well pleased with him on their account. (Isa. xlii. 41.) His people on account of his merits, are perfectly acquitted from all accusations.

His divinity further appears in this office. As an advocate he puts in a memorial of his death before his Father, for preserving every believer in a justified state, and also for the maintenance of grace in their hearts, enabling them to the performance of good works. Otherwise they would be overwhelmed by a deluge of in-dwelling corruptions. Now it requires one to be possessed of infinite wisdom, to know all the wants and circumstances of every believer, and it is just Christ himself who is so qualified, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

7. Is Christ an advocate with the Father? then see what aggravated guilt it is to contemn and abuse his intercession. It is a despising of the authority of God the Father, who appointed him to that office. Yea, it is an affront on Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who agreed in the eternal council of peace, that sinners should partake of new covenant blessings in that way. Now, it is an abuse of Christ's intercession, when men presume upon it and sin wilfully against knowledge, by satisfying some wicked desire, and then go to him to interpose for pardon. This is a heaven-daring profanation of his holy office as an advocate, as if it belonged to him to intercede for a license for our crimes, or sue for impunity to impenitence. Though this is a custom that prevails, and that is practised by many, yet I cannot help questioning if it belongs to the spots of God's children. It is the sins of infirmity, not of impenitent contempt, for the pardon of which he intercedes. "If any man," &c. His interposition is to comfort us under our burdens, not to encourage us in our infirmities that lead to sin.

Every act of unbelief is an abuse and profanation of Christ's office as an intercessor. Such as deny the necessity or sufficiency of his atonement, will infallibly question his right of intercession. Let such, however, consider that they strip or deprive themselves of all claims of acceptance in God's sight. They have nothing about them but what is loathsome to him. Every unbeliever or self-justifying person is among the proud, whom he knoweth afar off.

Once more, a neglect of prayer is also a contempt and an

abuse of this sacred office. It was the business of the priest under the law to receive every man's sacrifice that was acceptable, and present it: so it is Christ's, as an intercessor, to present the prayers of his people to his Father. But such as habitually neglect prayer, make, as it were, an attempt to frustrate the intercessory part of Christ's priesthood. Where there is no prayer or service offered, there is no matter for him to perfume. We would not wish to be understood by this, as if we meant that there is any real merit in prayer. No, there is no merit about the performances of either saints or sinners; but prayer is a duty which God requires of his people, and they ought to consider it as a particular privilege that they are allowed to pray to him, and so they ought to present their prayers and other duties to him, not only as acts of obedience, but also as offerings of praise and thanksgiving. (Ps. cvii. 22,) "And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." (Ps. cxvi. 17,) "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call on the name of the Lord." These Christ presents to his Father, perfumed and rendered acceptable through his merits. Has Christ lost his eloquence, his power, his interest in the Father? Has God utterly discarded the righteousness of his Son? Has he repented of sending him into the world to be an atoning and interceding High Priest? Is Christ, who went to heaven triumphantly on the footing of his merits, now of no consequence there? All this is the native language of those who continue in a prayerless state. It is indeed a reproach to any who would profess the name of christian, to neglect the exercise of prayer, and to despise Christ as an intercessor.

Second, This subject may be improved by a use of consolation to all true believers.

1. Believers may derive comfort, in their dejected seasons, from a consideration of the dignity of the person who is employed in this great work. He is God, equal with the Father, and this gives an infinite worth and merit to his sufferings for the pardon of all sin. Hence his blood is called the blood of God. (Acts xx. 28.)

2. Believers may derive comfort from the perpetuity of Christ's intercession. Indeed when persons look to their own duties and performances for comfort, there is always reason for dejection. They are often chargeable with neglect of duties, and at best these are performed with great defects and imperfections, which cause grief and sorrow. But Christ is a constant intercessor. He is as much a constant advocate

as his blood is a perpetual propitiation, and, till there be a failure in the merits of the one, there can never be an interruption in the pleas of the other. As the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat in the holy of holies was not to be wiped off, but to remain there as a visible mark of atonement; so Christ is entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. ix. 24.) He entered into heaven by his own blood, which is there to continue as a lasting atonement for all the sins which believers have committed, and all they shall commit; and what could they desire more? He prays on the footing of that blood, that they shall never come into condemnation.

3. Is Christ an interceding High Priest? hence see comfort to every believer in the prevalence of his intercession. The perpetuity of it assures us of the prevalence of it. If the rainbow in the cloud is a memorial to God, to preserve the world from ever being again drowned as he promised to Noah, (Gen. ix. 10,) then certainly the blood of his own Son being perpetually before him, will not suffer him to be forgetful of the covenant of grace, a covenant sealed with the blood of a person, who was high in his esteem from eternity. Will not the Father hear and answer him on these accounts, and is not that a sure foundation of comfort to the true saints of God? Yea, we are sure that God justifies them on account of the sacrifice which Christ offered to him. (Rom. viii. 33, 34,) "It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died," &c. Does God justify sinners on account of the merits of his Son, and will he not hear him interceding in their behalf on that footing? Yes, certainly: there is no blessing which he can ask for them, but it is granted. (Psal. xxi. 2,) "Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips."

Finally, here, we may propose a very few cases intended communicants may perhaps be in, and show them what encouragement they have to go and improve Christ in the character of an advocate. Whatever be your case, it is your proper exercise; and you have the greatest encouragement to put it entirely into his hand.

Some of you may perhaps think that you find, notwithstanding all the pains that have been hitherto taken upon you, and notwithstanding all the knowledge that you have really attained unto, a great ignorance still prevailing as to your duty and the great blessings that are freely offered to you in the gospel, and sealed to believers in the sacrament of the supper. Such as may be in this case, are warranted to put in their re-

quest. Christ is just now saying to you as he did to the blind man, (Luke xviii. 41,) "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" He is not promising in a limited manner as Ahasuerus did to Esther, to give even to the half of the kingdom, but he is promising to give you the whole of the kingdom. He is ready to give you knowledge, enabling you to act in a suitableness to the dignity to which you are preferred. He is complaining that you will not ask. (John xvi. 14,) "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." It is in the way of asking that you may expect to receive. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you."

Some of you have perhaps a real desire to put honor upon Christ by going forward to his table; but you are afraid that you have never hitherto had communion with him, and you dare not proceed, lest you dishonor him and provoke him to anger. To such we would answer, your exercise and experience, whatever they may be, are not that which constitute the rule of duty. It is the dying command of our Lord Christ to do this in remembrance of him; and that ought to have weight with you. It is only in the way of obedience to his commands that communion with him is to be expected. (Isa. lxiv 3,) "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness: those that remember thee in thy ways." If your desire be of a right kind, really from a principle of love to Christ and obedience to his command, you have the greatest encouragement to go forward. This desire is wrought in you by the God of all grace. and he will satisfy it. He never created such a desire in any but with the design of gratifying it. (Mat.v. 6,) "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Some of you perhaps may be thinking, that some months, weeks, or even days ago, you could have sat down at a communion-table, and even wished for an opportunity to put honor upon Christ by commemorating there his dying love. But now, matters are quite changed. Clouds deprive you of the light of his countenance. All this may be very true: your apprehension may be very just. God is sovereign both as to the degree and time of his manifestations. But perhaps there is a great cause for this. You have perhaps misimproved his former goodness and manifestation towards you, and thereby provoked him to hide his face. This was the case of the church in the beginning of the 3d of the Song. She was in a lazy frame and an indolent disposition. She sought Christ on

her bed, but she found him not. She arose and went about the city in the streets. She went to the watchmen inquiring at them, but found him not. She went but a little further and she found him whom her soul loved. She held him and would not let him go. Though you have missed him in reading, meditation and prayer, in attending ordinances and other duties, you must go a little further; perhaps you will find him at his table. We will assure you that he will be there. Plead his promise, "I will see you again."

But, perhaps, you may have been off your guard and employed with some temptation, and that has provoked him to hide his face and deprive you of sensible communion with him. This should lead you to search into your hearts and to acknowledge your sin unto God. There are both the greatest encouragement to that exercise and the greatest hazard attending the contrary practice. (1 John i. 1, 9,) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," &c. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." Sin regarded in the heart makes God shut out his people's prayers. It was in the way of confessing sin that David got deliverance. (Psal. xxxii. 5,) "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

AN EXTRACT

FROM ANOTHER OF MR. CLARKSON'S SERMONS.

Lastly, Let me put you in mind of, and exhort you to, the performance of another important duty, namely, public collections on each Lord's day, when you are assembled together to worship. This is a duty in which we have the example of the saints for our direction. (Acts xi. 28, 29, 30, and Rom. xii. 13, and xv. 26, 27. 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3, and ix. 6, 7, 8.) If it should be here objected, that these scriptures respect collections made for the poor, but that in this land we have public funds by which the needy are supplied, and that removes the necessity of collections. To this I answer, that it can not escape the knowledge of many that there are some who need more assistance than is allowed them by that laudable scheme. Moreover there are many other uses for collections, than simply the necessities of the poor. We find (2 Kings xii,) that money was brought into the treasury for repairing the house of the Lord; and in many other places of scripture. Yea, we find that it is a standing ordinance or duty in the christian church. (1 Cor. xvi. 2,) "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come." The Westminster Assembly of Divines, in the Larger Catechism, on that Question, How is the Sabbath or Lord's day, to be sanctified? quote this text proving public collections to be a part of the worship of the day. Solomon says, (Prov. iii. 9, 10,) "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase. So shall thy barnes be filled with plenty, and thy presses burst out with new wine." (Chap. xi. 25, 26, and xxix. 17. Eccles. xi. 1; and Mark xii. 41.) All these duties ought to be done out of love to God. The motive to obedience in slaves is sordid and base, it is love to themselves, and fear of God as an enemy.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. THOMAS BEVERIDGE.

It must be confirming to the faith of christians, and encouraging to those who are engaged in a testimony for present truth, to read the ensuing account of the life and death of that eminent servant of Jesus Christ, the Rev. Thomas Beveridge, late minister of the gospel to the Associate congregation of Cambridge, Washington county, State of New-York.

This great and good man was born in the year 1749, at East-side, parish of Fossoway and shire of Fife, in Scotland. He was descended of reputable parents. His uncle, Thomas Beveridge, was a member of the Associate congregation of Paisley, and died in a manner almost as remarkable and triumphant as that of his nephew. Mr. Beveridge was bred under the ministry of the Rev. William Mair, of Muckart, whose lectures on the 1st, 2d and 3d chapters of Matthew are published, and have received the approbation of a discerning public: the preface to these lectures was written by him. After studying philosophy he entered the divinity hall, under the inspection of the Rev. William Moncrief of Alloa.

Some time after he was licensed to preach the gospel, he was appointed to assist the Rev. Adam Gib, minister of the gospel at Edinburgh, in his aged and infirm state. Here, by lodging in the same house with Mr. Gib, he had access not only to his library, but to be daily conversant with him, which was greatly for his improvement. This intercourse led to a friendship between them, which was never after impaired. His public services in Edinburgh were very acceptable both to Mr. Gib and the congregation; and his private deportment was marked with wisdom and circumspection.

In consequence of a petition from the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania for help, the General Associate Synod ap-

pointed Mr. Beveridge to come to America, and directed that he should be ordained by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh. Mr. Gib preached the ordination sermon on the 23d of September, 1783, from John x. 16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also must I bring."*

In the spring of 1784 he arrived in America, after a tedious passage of sixteen weeks: and soon after took his seat in the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, met at Philadelphia May 4th, same year.

Here the abilities of Mr. Beveridge were early displayed. The Presbytery finding it necessary to state their prosession of the faith of Christ, in a manner more particularly suited to the state of this country, agreed to draw up a Testimony for the Doctrine and Order of the Church of Christ; and they appointed Mr. Beveridge to make out a draught. This work he cheerfully undertook, and assidiously

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* This excellent sermon is printed, and contains the following remarkable passage. Speaking of the manner of Christ's bringing his sheep—"He waits not till they come to the means of grace, but he sends these means to them. He has each in his eye, in every generation, through all parts of the world, whom he must bring; and he sends, and will send the gospel to them for that end. He sent it in the early ages to Scotland. He has been bringing many of his sheep here, in the course of by-past generations, and he is still doing so to the northernmost isles of it, which the ancients are supposed to have meant by their *Ultima Thule*, as being the remotest parts of the then known world, from the original seat of literature and refinement. And in this latter period he has gone, and is still going farther off, for bringing in his other sheep, in the far remoter climes of America. He will bring them all as they may be found scattered through the regions of a new protestant empire, wonderfully constituted in that part of the world."

The solemn charge delivered to Mr. Beveridge immediately after his ordination, concludes with this memorable passage:—"Commit yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, as devoted to his service in the ministry of reconciliation. Entrust him with your preservation and through-bearing, amidst all dangers, distresses and difficulties, which may be before your hand.—Commit your ministry to the Lord Christ, for his supporting you in it, qualifying you more and more for it, and countenancing you in the exercise of it, in bringing some of his other sheep.—Study faithfulness to the solemn engagements which you have come under, with steadfastness in your christian profession; maintaining a steadfast adherence to that Testimony for a Covenanted Reformation which you have solemnly espoused; neither ashamed nor afraid to persevere in an honest appearance for it.—Study faithfulness to the exercise of your ministry: 'rightly dividing the word of truth;' and preaching to others, that doctrine upon which you are to venture your own soul for eternity. 'Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine: Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.' And let all your dependence be upon the Lord Christ, for his being the breath while he makes you the trumpet.—Depend upon him in frequent and earnest prayer; for his enduing you with wisdom, prudence, courage, honesty and ability, on the side of his cause: in opposition to the apostacy now taking place in North America, among some who were once of the same witnessing body with us. And 'the Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit: Grace be with you. Amen.' "—This solemn charge was delivered by the aged and venerable Mr. Gib, and was truly exemplified and faithfully kept by Mr. Beveridge, in the whole course of his ministry.

applied himself to it, during the summer; and it was approved, and judicially agreed to at Pequa, August 25, 1784. During the same meeting of Presbytery a petition arrived from Cambridge, in the state of New York, subscribed by a large number of respectable people, praying the Associate Presbytery to send one of their number to dispense divine ordinances among them according to the received principles of said Presbytery. Mr. Beveridge was sent in the autumn of this year, and continued there till the next spring; during which time the hearts of the people became knit to him as their minister, and they afterwards applied for the ordinary steps to have him fixed among them.

In the spring of the year 1785, he came to New-York, and was the instrument of organizing the Associate Congregation there; and from that time till his death, he had a very tender concern about that people. Indeed he had the care of all the churches on his mind.

The call from Cambridge being accepted by him, he was accordingly fixed among that people, on the 10th of Sept. 1789. The Rev. John Anderson preached on the occasion, from John xiii. 20. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." After which; the Rev. David Goodwillie did, in the ordinary manner, admit Mr. Beveridge to the Pastoral charge of said congregation.

In this charge he labored with great diligence, in explaining the doctrines of the gospel, and applying them to the conscience of his hearers; in visiting the sick, in catechising and exhorting from house to house; and was particularly careful to instruct the rising generation. His labors were also extended to several places in the state, particularly to Argyle-Town, and Curries Bush, at both which places he dispensed the Lord's Supper. And it was remarked that on these solemn occasions, both at home and abroad, he appeared evidently to "ride on the high places of the earth," and to be "fed with the heritage of Jacob his father,"—having much secret "fellowship, with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Mr. Beveridge presided at the ordination of the Rev. David Goodwillie, in the hall of the University of Pennsylvania, on the 31st of October, 1788, when he preached from 2 Cor. iv. i. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not."* He also presided at the ordination of the Rev. John Cree, at New-York, October, 12,

*See the following sermon.

1792, when he preached from 2 Tim. ii. 2. "The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others." This day was spent as a day of solemn humiliation and prayer, in the afternoon and evening whereof, the members of the Associate Presbytery, together with the elders and other members of the Associate congregation of New-York, did, with uplifted hands, enter into the Solemn Engagement to duties. Mr. Beveridge joined with his brethren in this solemn work.

In the end of June 1798, he set out for Barnet,* in order to assist the Rev. David Goodwillie at the dispensation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In passing through Ryegate township, on his way thither, he received a draught of bad water, which infected his bowels, and issued in a dysentery, which occasioned his death. Though much indisposed when he arrived at Barnet, he preached on Saturday. On Sabbath his disorder had increased to such a degree, that he was obliged to sit while he served two tables. But notwithstanding his afflicted situation, he preached in the evening, an excellent and very affecting sermon, from John xvii. 11, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world; and I come to thee." This was his last appearance in public; and though conflicting with a mortal distemper, his piety and talents seemed to shine with uncommon lustre, and he addressed the audience with all the fervor of a dying man. He was unable to attend public worship on the thanksgiving on Monday.

It was not till three weeks after this, that he departed this life: all which time the hopes and fears of those who attended him were alternately excited; yet hopes of his recovery were never totally given up till the evening before his death.

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* Just before he set out on his last journey, he wrote to his friend in Philadelphia, as follows:

"I hesitate a little about setting out to Barnet, from the state of my family; but it is probable I will go. I never found my family more safe, than when going abroad. I have committed them to the Lord's protection. No journey can be less agreeable; but it may be the Lord whom I desire to serve, may have some use for his poor unworthy servant in that place. I am sure I cannot well blame myself as to bye ends. The government is on Christ's shoulder. I bless God, I have satisfaction of soul at times in his work: and I know it is good to draw near to him. Let us rely on the Lord, and he will do great things for us. The voice of Christ from heaven saith, 'according to your faith be it unto you.'—My hope is, that as the Lord of hosts hath a 'very small remnant,' we shall not 'be as Sodom', nor made 'like unto Gomorrah.' I hope for mercy in the midst of wrath, to Britain and America. Great things are accomplishing in the way of judgment, yet it is sad to think of the ruin of the churches—Geneva, Switzerland, and Holland ruined, or nearly so. O Lord, in wrath remember mercy! May the Lord God of all consolation be with you."

During these three weeks he was chiefly employed in prayer and reading the scriptures; and when unable to read himself, he would desire one or other of his elders, (who faithfully attended him) to read to him such passages as he pointed out on which he frequently made observations as they went along.

His congregation hearing that he was sick, immediately sent Mr. James Small and Mr. Robert Oliver,* two of their elders to see him; these not returning, as soon as was expected two others were dispatched who arrived at Barnet as the people were returning from his funeral.

The contagion of his disorder was caught by Mr. Goodwillie's family. Two of his children fell victims to it before Mr. Beveridge's death, and were laid in one grave;† and Mr. Goodwillie himself was dangerously ill of it. On Sabbath, a number of the people gathered to the house where these two distressed ministers lay. Mr. Beveridge's heart was so touched with compassion towards them, who were, at that time, as sheep without a shepherd, that he insisted on being permitted to preach to them. Notwithstanding the entreaty of his friends, he roused himself once more, and sat up in bed, around which the people gathered; and after praise and prayer, he preached a well connected and very practical sermon, from Psal. xxxi. 23. "O love the Lord all ye his saints."‡ This discourse was delivered with great fervor of spirit, and in the application, he did, in a very pathetic manner, exhort the people of Barnet to study peace among themselves; and said, if any of them should still go on with their contentions, which he had labored to remove, he would be a witness against them in the day of judgment: he exhorted them to steadfastness in their religious profession, and warned them of the danger of leaving their own communion, which he understood some of them seemed disposed to do at that time.

He preached about an hour, and after prayer and praise dismissed the congregation. The fatigue he then subjected

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* Mr. Oliver was for a number of years Stated Clerk of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

† Mrs. Goodwillie behaved with such exemplary prudence, that notwithstanding Mr. Beveridge was the means of bringing the disorder into the house, of which two of her children died, she was unremitting in her kindness to him; and, though an affectionate mother, never shed a tear in his sight, for fear of hurting his sensibility.

‡ Mr. Beveridge, while a student, heard a remarkable sermon on the evening of a Communion Sabbath, from this same text, preached by the late Rev. and pious William Jamieson, minister of the gospel at Killwinning, which made a deep and lasting impression on his mind, and ever after endeared the memory of Mr. Jamieson to him.

himself to was far above his strength. In the evening he grew worse; the fever increased, and before midnight all hopes of his recovery were lost. He was fully sensible of his situation, and desired Mr. Oliver to call Mr. Small (who had lain down to take some rest) to his assistance, as he found he could not raise himself by the help of one, as formerly. He continued in this state till about the break of day, when the storm was changed into a calm.

To the astonishment of those who attended him, he sat up in his bed, and said, "I am a dying man, and dying fast,—but as to bodily pain I am free of it. I feel no more of this than you do, nor is there a man in Barnet who is more at ease than I am.* Did ever you witness any thing similar to this? Are you not also persuaded I am dying?" One of them answered, yes. "It is well, said he, I am not afraid to die." Mr. Goodwillie was now called up from his bed. When he and the family were come into the room, Mr. Beveridge said, he would pray once more with them bofore he departed. He then stretched forth his hands, and spoke as fully and distinctly, and with as much composure as when in perfect health. With an audible voice he addressed the throne of grace, in behalf of the church of Christ in general, and the Secession body in particular,—his own congregation at Cambridge, especially the rising generation,—his brethren in the ministry, Mr. Marshall in Philadelphia, and Mr. Goodwillie by name, that they might be supported under the trying providences they had met with in their flocks and families. He also prayed for them who had so faithfully attended him during his illness,—and having commended his soul into the hand of God who gave it, he concluded his pathetic and heart-melting prayer with these words, THE PRAYERS OF THOMAS BEVERIDGE ARE NOW ENDED; in allusion to what David says in the close of the 72d Psalm.

After this he addressed the company that were round about him: he exhorted Mr. Goodwillie not to give way to excessive grief for the loss of his children, as he would eventually find this among the things that were working together for good. He thanked him and Mrs. Goodwillie for their great kindness shown to him in his illness; and desired him, when he wrote to Mr. Marshall in Philadelphia, to inform him, that he had not forgot him in his last moments. He addressed others in the company, according to the various trials which had passed

* It is supposed that the physical cause of his feeling no pain, was, that his bowels were now mortified.

over them, in which he discovered the most perfect recollection. After this he lay down, and desired that two persons might sit by him, one on each side, as he was apprehensive he would depart if he fell asleep: he then requested the rest of the company to withdraw. In the forenoon he lay very quiet, and declared he was perfectly at ease. In the afternoon he became worse, and took little notice of any person. He called for Mr. Goodwillie, and asked him if he knew what time the Son of man would come. He replied, he thought it would be the ensuing night about ten o'clock, or at farthest about cock-crowing. To which Mr. Beveridge answered, I know now; after which he lay still.

In the evening he seemed to recover from the languor in which he had lain for some hours; and with an audible voice, as distinctly as if he had been in the pulpit, repeated twice that memorable passage, (Job xix. 25, 26, 27,) "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." These were the last words he spoke. After this he gradually weakened, till about ten o'clock, when he expired—without a sigh, without a struggle, and without a groan.

Thus ended his days, one of the best of men, and a most eminent servant of Jesus Christ; and who was supported in his last illness with that consolation he had often given to others. (Psal. xxxvii. 37,) "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." He was called home to his Father's house, "to the general assembly and church of the first-born," to be with Christ and his apostles and prophets, and the wise men of old, with the ancient martyrs and confessors of the name of Jesus; and has received the divine approbation of his Lord and Master, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

His brethren in the ministry are very sensible of the loss they have sustained, in being deprived of his counsel and advice. He was sent to America at a time when his singular abilities were much wanted; and there does not appear to have been a man sent by the General Associate Synod, whose talents have proved more useful to the general interests of the religious body with which he was connected. He took an active part in stating the religious profession made by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and had a principal hand

in composing the public papers, which express their views concerning the faith of Christ.* But amidst these and other avocations he did not neglect his flock; and his diligence among them was attended with visible success. They form now a very numerous, pious, and respectable body of people. They greatly esteemed their minister while he lived, and since his death have shown the most dutiful respect to his memory, by ordering a handsome monument to be erected over his grave in the church-yard of Barnet; and by making provision for his family. He has left a widow and five children, (the youngest of whom was born since his death) who very sensibly feel the loss they have sustained;—but he often committed them unto the Lord, who will be faithful to his promise, in being a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow.

To attempt to delineate the character of this eminent servant of Christ, would require one possessed of equal abilities. He was critically acquainted with the holy scriptures, which he daily studied in the original languages. His distinct views of evangelical truth, rendered him always acceptable in his public discourses, to those who had any savor for the things of God: while his extensive acquaintance with the history, constitution, and order of the church of Christ, made him very useful to the Presbytery of which he was a member. He had a plentiful measure of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which shone forth in his great humility, weanedness from the world, solemnity of carriage, and in his being a man of prayer, and always deeply impressed with a sense of the Divine Majesty. He was much favored with intimacy with his God: he frequently spent days, yea, whole nights, in prayer and wrestling with God. At sacramental times he slept little, and his conversation was very heavenly. He was ordinarily much countenanced in his ministry on such occasions.

He was well acquainted with the writings of the Reformers, and with the rise and progress of the Reformation, together with the wonderful events of Divine Providence in bringing it about. Indeed, he was possessed of the same spirit with these eminent instruments, in the hand of God, for bringing about our glorious deliverance from the tyranny of Antichrist; and had nothing more at heart than the further reformation of the church of Christ in his own day. In one

* "He had (says the Editors of the Christian Magazine) the satisfaction to see the church with which he was connected, spring up as from a tender shoot, till it became strong, and spread its branches through various parts of the United States of America."

word, it may be said, that very few in this age possess an equal assemblage of gifts and graces, with as few imperfections, as Mr. Beveridge did.

His body lies in the church-yard of Barnet, in the ground appropriated for the use of Mr. Goodwillie's family, and at the side of those two children who died of the same disorder with himself. On his tomb-stone is the following inscription:

"In hope of a blessed resurrection, rests under this stone, the mortal part of the Rev. THOMAS BEVERIDGE, late minister of the Gospel at Cambridge, in the State of New-York, and member of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. He was born at East-side, Parish of Fossoway, and Shire of Fife, Scotland.—Ordained to the holy ministry at Edinburgh, in September, 1783, by appointment of the Associate Synod, with a view to a mission to North America, where he arrived the ensuing year, and was admitted to his pastoral charge in September, 1789; in which he labored with uncommon care and diligence, and his labors were crowned with visible success. He came here to assist at the dipensation of the Lord's Supper, and departed this life on the 23d of July, 1798, in the 49th year of his age.——(Rev. xiv. 13,) 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: and their works do follow them.' (1 Thess. iv. 14,) 'Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.'

"The Associate Congregation of Cambridge have caused this Sepulchral Monument to be erected, as a lasting memorial of their sense of his great worth, and their respect to his memory, which will be long held in remembrance among them."

SERMON,

BY THE REV. THOMAS BEVERIDGE.

(Preached at Philadelphia, Oct. 31, 1788, at the Ordination of the Rev. David Goodwillie.)

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." (2 Cor. iv. 1.)

The work in which they are engaged, who carry the Lord's message to his church, is great, and quite above mere human strength. They are ambassadors for Christ; and, being men compassed with infirmity, they seem very unfit for such an high office. They are employed to deal with enemies, as though God did beseech these by them; and as in Christ's stead to pray these, "Be ye reconciled to God." This proposal of peace is often despised; yea, they who in the Lord's name make it, are for his sake exposed to reproach, to suffering, and to death. "Behold," says Christ to his messengers, "I send you forth as sheep among wolves." If we act with a single eye, and with an upright heart, "serving God with our spirit in the gospel of his son," we may lay our account with much ill-will, and many sore thrusts to make us fall, among this adulterous and sinful generation. But, we must "endure hardship, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." We are in the service, and under the care of a gracious master, who knows our frame, and will not lay upon us more than is meet; he hath said, "as thy days so shall thy strength be." "Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

The grace given to Paul, made him shine as a star of the first magnitude in the New Testament church. It may be said of the other apostles, that they did excellently; but he excelled them all. He was eminent in faith; eminent for his knowledge in the mystery of Christ; eminent in abilities for

the work of the gospel; eminent in zeal for the house of God; eminent for that holy fortitude, which made him so cheerfully hazard his life in the cause of Christ. "What mean ye," said he to his friends, on a certain occasion, "to weep, and to break mine heart, for I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." He had, however, nothing save what he received, and nothing more than he needed. He was carried through his work as all the Lord's servants then were, and still are, by daily communications of strength from on high; and, therefore, he owns himself a debtor to mercy, as much, or more, than his brethren. "Seeing WE have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." Communications of grace are made to some saints more abundantly than to others; but those who have least shall not perish in the way; he who gathereth the lambs with his arm, and carrieth them in his bosom, will bring them safe to glory, "a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench," and those who have most will find, on many occasions, that they have use for it all.

The Corinthians were, as many still are, disposed to make light of the ministry of reconciliation, on account of the suffering state and mean appearance of those employed in it. Therefore, the apostle in the preceding chapter shows them, that the glory which attended the proclamation of the law at Sinai, was in no wise so great as that of the New Testament Church. The former was the ministration of death; by the law was the knowledge of sin, and from the law issued wrath to devour the transgressors; but that in which he and his brethren were employed, was the ministry of reconciliation; by the gospel was the knowledge of Christ the Saviour, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

When the law was proclaimed, the thunders, the lightnings, the dark cloud, the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, the burning mountain, and the earthquake were so terrible, that all the people trembled, and Moses himself said, I exceedingly fear and quake. The sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of Mount Sinai, in the eyes of the children of Israel, an emblem of the wrath which will consume the breakers of that law. The gospel speaks better things. The sum of it is: "That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and that "he hath sent forth his son, made of a

woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The law being weak through the flesh, the holy commandment stirring up the enmity of the corrupt heart against God, it revived sin; it could not take it away. Had not salvation, through the Messiah, been made known in the promise, and held forth in the types and shadows of the Old Testament dispensation, the law published at Sinai would have profited Israel nothing. Believers at that time fled from it (as they still do) to Christ; expecting salvation, not through their obedience to the precept, but through the grace manifested in the promise.

The law was wrote and engraved on stones, at Sinai; but in the more glorious ministration of the spirit, it is wrote and engraved on the hearts of men. The former writing perished; the latter endures for ever.

Terror and darkness attended the ministry of Moses; his face indeed shone, but the children of Israel could not look upon it. This light filled them with dread; and it had no sanctifying influence upon them. They continued to murmur, rebel, and go astray; but the light of the glory of God, shining in the person and mediation of Jesus Christ, is not a terror to us, it is our life, and our salvation. The Old Testament saints enjoyed the dawning of it. Abraham saw the day of Christ in the sure signs of the morning, "and was glad," and so likewise did all who in those early ages were partakers of like precious faith with him. Now the day is broke; the shadows are fled away: and the Son of righteousness is risen with healing in his wings. "We all" says the apostle, "with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." Therefore, adds he, seeing we have this ministry, which is so glorious, committed to us, we find life to ourselves in the word which we preach to others, and are upheld by that mercy which in the name of the Lord we proclaim to all the wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. We are not only messengers to tell others of the Lord's goodness, but we are monuments of it ourselves; "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

This text leads us to speak, *first*, of the ministry of the gospel, *next*, of the peculiar trials which usually attend those who are employed in it, and *lastly*, of the mercy which preserves them from fainting.

I. Head, concerning this ministry, these things may be observed:

1. That none may enter into it unless they are called of God. "How shall they preach unless they be sent." We must avoid those who, through presumption, or through delusion, or through both, take upon themselves an office which was never given to them. It will be alleged by some, that many truths may be taught by such persons. It may be so. Satan, in the blackness of hell, would terrify men: transformed into an angel of light, he deceives them. The murderer never attempts to administer poison by itself; he mixeth it with that which would otherwise be wholesome food. They who deal in false money, send it not abroad in their own name; they counterfeit the true coin; and the more nearly their base mettle resembles this, it answers their purpose so much the better. The persons of whom we speak would deceive none, if every thing about them was visibly bad. They come in sheep's clothing, but wolves they are, and in the spirit of wolves do they enter in among the flock. It is enough to us, that the Lord hath said, "I sent them not, neither commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all." They who have this ministry, have it by a commission from the head of the church, from whom they also receive mercy to uphold them in it.

2. They have the Lord's call to this ministry, who, after due trial of their abilities, are set apart to it by the courts of his house, acting in his name. An immediate call from God is not now to be expected. After the New Testament church was formed, and directions given how it was to be supplied with pastors and teachers, this was no longer necessary. Those ordained by Timothy and Titus, had no other call to the ministry than we now have; their fitness for the work was tried, and they were set apart to it, "by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Timothy was ordained in this manner himself. One person, for the sake of order, must preside in such ordinations, as Paul seems to have done in that of Timothy; but there is no reason to suppose that this work was in those times performed by any person alone. Ordination by a Presbytery constitutes one a minister of the Catholic or Universal church. The call of the people is necessary to constitute him the minister of a particular congregation. It is the consolation of them who are faithful in God's house, that they are employed in the work to which he called them, and in the place to which he sent them.

3. The Lord endues those whom he calls to this ministry,

with talents necessary for it. It is required of them that are stewards in his house, that they be faithful, and wise, and tender towards his children, giving them their meat in due season. A divine skill is necessary in ministers of the gospel, that they may rightly divide the word of truth. They must be able by sound doctrine, both "to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle toward all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;" he ought to be "an example of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity; to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine," devoting himself wholly, his time, his talents, his heart to this work. According to the appointed order, the trial of men's endowments for the ministry of the gospel, is to be made by them who have the oversight of the flock; and the trial of the fitness of any one to labor in a particular congregation, is to be left to the members of it, so far as that no one is to be fixed among them, but in consequence of their calling him to that charge. The most able, and the most upright of those who have been employed in this ministry, have such affecting evidences of their own weakness before their eyes, and such an impression of the weight of the work, that they are often afraid to enter upon it; and sometimes doubtful whether they ought to continue in it. But it is wisely ordered, that none are left to judge for themselves in this matter. If it was not so, many who have been eminently useful in the church, would have been, as to any public service lost to it; and it would have been ruined by self-conceited persons, from very unworthy motives, thrusting themselves into the place of teachers. To such indeed a great door is opened in this land. The most part are either careless, and altogether despise the ordinances of Christ; or being led away by the spirit of error, they have itching ears, and after their own lusts heap up to themselves teachers: they will not endure sound doctrine; but are ever ready to hear the instruction which causeth to err. It is no uncommon thing among us to find persons pretending an extraordinary or immediate call to the ministry, while the reason of this pretence is nothing else than the want of ordinary qualifications for it. They are ignorant of the languages in which the holy scriptures were written, and unacquainted with the most common, and most useful parts of learning, and destitute of every endowment necessary to qualify them for the office of the ministry. They cannot teach that which they have not yet learned. They know they have no abilities which will abide a

proper trial, and therefore blasphemously affirm, that in their case none is necessary: Somewhat like that anti-christian synagogue to which they are allied; when it was no longer able to defend its abominations, it assumed new impudence, and endeavored to end all disputes by asserting its own infallibility. It is to be lamented, that the word of God should be so abused as it is among us by the daring presumption of these deceivers, of whom we now speak. They may amuse people by empty declamation; they cannot edify them by wholesome instruction. If a Greek or Roman author translated into our language, was thus abused and perverted by ignorant and false expositions, the world would cry out against it, as an insult to them, and to a work worthy of better treatment: but the abuse, and perversion of the sacred oracles is a light matter, or even a matter of scorn in this sinful generation.

4. The wisdom and glory of God is displayed in the committing of this ministry to men of like passions, with those to whom they are sent. We are not in this state fit for an immediate intercourse with the world of spirits. Therefore the Lord speaks to us by messengers, whose terror need not make us afraid, by messengers who themselves need that salvation they preach to others, and by messengers in whose weakness his strength is made perfect. By reason of our blindness, we sometimes give the praise to men which is due to God alone; if Angels had been employed in the ministry of the gospel, we would have been still less able to distinguish between the servant and his Lord, between the instrument and the Almighty hand working by it. God has taken some of our rebellious family, and sent them to tell the rest, that they have destroyed themselves, but in him is their help; that he hath set forth his eternal and well-beloved Son, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; that he will not reject the vilest of the vile, who come to him through this only mediator between God and men; that though they are by nature all unwilling, yet he will draw his chosen with the cords of love; and that all they lost in the first Adam, shall be restored with advantage in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Thus by instruments which appear contemptible in the eyes of the world, and who are in themselves most unworthy of such honorable employment, he destroys the kingdom of Satan, raiseth up the building of mercy, and brings sinners out of the depths of wretchedness; from the sorrows of death to reign in life by Christ, and with Christ for ever and ever. We are weak indeed, but we serve him who is King of Kings. *and*

Lord of Lords. Most gladly therefore will we rather glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on us.

5. The efficacy of this ministry depends not on grace in them to whom it is committed, but on the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, accompanying their administrations. Men whose hearts are not right with God, but whose wickedness lies hid from the church, may have a regular call to the ministry, and the truths of the gospel preached by them may be attended with the divine blessing, though they themselves have no part nor lot in it. It is God who giveth the increase. There was ONE Judas among the apostles, to show, that for holy and wise ends, the Lord may employ such as he, and but ONE to show, that he does not commonly employ such persons as his messengers to the church. Some after being for a time employed in this ministry, by falling into damnable heresies, or into habitual wickedness of life, have manifested themselves to have been always in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity; like Judas, who did not change as to his heart, but only as to his outward appearance; our Lord declaring concerning him at his best, that he then was what he afterwards proved himself to be. "Have I not chosen you twelve," said he to the apostles, "and one of you is a devil." Yet the word of God, preached by such is not rendered of none effect through their wickedness. It may still be the power of God unto salvation. None can have more need of the grace of God implanted in them, than those who preach it to others; and none ought to be employed in the ministry, unless they have what may in the judgment of charity be reckoned good evidences of it. A graceless ministry are the ruin of the church, they are cold, they are careless, they are time-servers, they are not steadfast in the profession of the faith; their heart is not engaged in the Lord's work; nor can they divide his word with that spiritual wisdom, or speak with that true zeal in his cause, as they would do if their fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. But that the virtue of gospel ordinances proceeds from those who administer them, or depends upon their piety and good intentions, is a popish doctrine, designed to magnify the ministers of Antichrist, and make void the grace of God; it is contrary to the scripture, and condemned as such by the Protestant churches. Ministers of the gospel may as well as others be tossed with sad fears as to their own interest in Christ. It would be hard indeed if they might not preach him to others, till they were fully resolved in a question which may be often very difficult for them to determine.

People are often at a loss to know whether they are in Christ themselves; sad and endless would their perplexity be, if they were under the necessity of being certain as to the state of a minister, ere they could know whether he had the Lord's call to preach the gospel to them, and whether they might expect a blessing to attend the word spoken by him.

6. The Lord's flock can never be absolutely deprived of this ministry. Some of them may be scattered into places where the joyful sound of it is not heard, others of them may attend on it at the peril of their lives, but he who gave it will not take it away till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto what we have not yet attained, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The scaffolding, if we may so speak, will not be taken down till the building of mercy is finished. The servants and witnesses of Jesus Christ, may prophesy in sackcloth; they shall not be silent; they may be slain; but the spirit of life from God shall again enter into them. The candlestick may be removed, the light shall not be extinguished. The Lord in righteous judgment may take gospel ordinances away from a sinful nation, from a people laden with iniquity as we are, but these ordinances shall not cease. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, Christ's "seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." The Lord has a tender regard to the congregation of his poor. He may rebuke them, and try them, and teach them the value of their privileges, by very afflicting dispensations, which threaten the loss of these altogether; but he will not forget them forever. "I will," saith he, "give you pastors according to mine own heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The commission given to the apostles, extends to the end of time. They were not any more than the prophets to live forever; but the promise respects them as living in their successors. "Go," said our Lord, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

II. Head, concerning the peculiar trials which attend this ministry.

This ministry sits very light on many who profess to be employed in it. They enter into it without fear, continue in it without care, and end their days in it without remembering that they ought to watch for souls as those who must give an account. Robbers come in, not by the door, and enrich

themselves by spoiling the flock. Hirelings care not for it, and flee when they see the wolf coming. But those who are faithful in the service of Christ, are often sore pressed under their burdens. It is through much tribulation, that all the saints enter into the kingdom of God, and such of them as are called to the public service of the gospel, have commonly a double portion. They have a conflict to maintain against corruption remaining in themselves, and they have much trouble from the corruptions of other men, among whom they exercise this ministry. Sometimes through reproaches and sufferings, they are set forth as it were appointed to death; and are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. As to the peculiar trials and temptations which usually attend them, these things may be observed.

1. It is often a grief of heart to them, that they deliver the Lord's message to his church so weakly and confusedly, and sometimes with such manifest defects, as they fear may bring discredit on the work in which they are engaged. The Lord, on many occasions, leaves them so far as that they may well see their own insufficiency. He will have this saying engraved on the hearts of such as he makes useful, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." He will show all, that the excellency of the power attending the word is of him, not of them who preach it. He gives to his servants that they may give to the multitude; and sometimes he withholds from them, as a just punishment on those to whom they are sent, thus testifying that his spirit shall not always strive with them who despise his warnings. He may do to his messengers according to what he said to Ezekiel, when, like him, they are employed among a people joined to their idols. "I will," said he, "make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be a reprover unto them, for they are a rebellious house." Whatever the design be, the trial is severe, as it appears to the Lord's servants, an evidence of his displeasure at them, or at his flock, or at both. Ignorance and presumption may help some to speak confidently enough, while they neither know what they say, nor whereof they affirm; but the language which has a divine propriety, the message which bears the signature of God upon it, the liberty by which any are helped, in Christ's name, to speak a word in season to them that are weary, is the accomplishment of the promise, "I will cause the horn of Israel to bud, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them." It is from the spirit of the Lord resting on his servants. Paul found such need of

aid from above in preaching Christ, that after exhorting the Ephesians to make supplication for all saints, he adds, "and for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel."

2. They who are employed in the ministry of the gospel, may lay their account with this, that the Lord will not suffer those faults of theirs, which might be an evil example to his church, to pass without signal chastisement. He will forgive them, but for a warning to others, he commonly makes his displeasure as public as their trespass. Moses was very meek, above all the men who were on the face of the earth; yet the rebellious family of Israel did so provoke him, at the waters of Meribah, that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. His offence seemed small, according to the light thoughts men have of such matters; but the righteous judge was displeased with him, and that all might stand in awe and not sin, even Moses, admitted to such near and frequent intercourse with God, as no mere man on earth ever enjoyed, for his trespass, was excluded from the land of promise. When ministers of the gospel think on their former ways, they may often see some sad mismanagements chargeable upon them. Sometimes they speak what ought not to be spoken; the fire of corruption in others, kindling another such fire in them. Sometimes they are silent when they ought to speak, the fear of man bringing them into the snare. In a word, when they consider how much is required, and how little they do, and how many defects attend the little that is done, and what a pernicious and lasting influence their faults may have on the Lord's cause and flock, and how justly he might make them a profitable example to others in their sufferings, who have been an evil example to others in their sins—I say, when they consider these things, they are ready to adopt the Psalmist's language, "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me." The faith of God's everlasting covenant prevents them from fainting, for he will not cast off for ever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

3. They who are employed in this ministry, often labor in vain as to many, or even as to the most part of those to whom they are sent. In grief of heart they are constrained to cry, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It is most discouraging to carry the Lord's message day by day, to them who hear it as if they heard it not; being, so to speak, preached deaf, blind and insensible.

"To whom," says the prophet, "shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? behold their ear is uncircumcised, they cannot hearken; behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it." Paul mentions two sorts for whom, and by whom, he was exceedingly grieved; and ministers of the gospel in the present time, will find them very numerous: the first were ungodly men, pretending to be christians. "Many walk," says he to the Philippians, "of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." The second were avowed despisers of the Lord's salvation; he tells the Romans, "that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart, on account of his unbelieving countrymen; other afflictions passed away, but this remained to the day of his death, he calls it "a continual sorrow." Our Lord Jesus, in the days of his humiliation, tasted this affliction; he looked round him on an assembly of obstinate sinners with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts; and when he beheld Jerusalem, the city which killed the prophets, and stoned them who were sent to it, he wept over it, saying, "if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." All his servants are in some degree conformed to him, in having this affliction to bear: the more intent they are in the Lord's work, it wounds their hearts so much the more to see the opposition made to it: the greater compassion they have for perishing souls, it is so much the more grievous to them, when they find, that in their ministry they are a savor of death unto death to them; their hearers stumbling at the word of life, and dashing themselves to pieces on the rock of salvation. It is well, however, if they can say, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded," we have not shunned to declare unto them, to whom thou didst send us, all thy counsel. The servant who is faithful, though his labors should be found unsuccessful, shall enter into the everlasting joy of his Lord.

4. After much labor in the work of the gospel a storm often blows, which seems almost entirely to destroy the fair prospect the Lord's servants once had of a harvest. By little and little are people brought to the knowledge and profession of sound doctrine; but error spreads among them like a raging pestilence. Order is established in the church, not without much time, much toil, and many conflicts, from opposing temptations; but the building, which was the labor of years, seems to be broken down by the enemy in a day. Quickly

do people go astray: "I marvel," said Paul to the Galatians, "that ye are so soon removed from him who called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel;" and again, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." Such lamentable instances of sudden ruin wrought by the enemy, beguiling unstable souls, filled him with a painful concern for the weak. "When I could no longer forbear," says he to the Thessalonians: when like an affectionate parent, I was in continual fears about my absent children exposed to danger, "I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain." Thus we may be humble, and ought to be watchful: when things look best, we know not how soon there may be a sad change; we know our faithful High Priest, the great and the good Shepherd will keep his own: he paid too high a price for them to lose them; he loves them too dearly to let any pluck them out of his hand; but the wanderings of his sheep and the treachery of foes creeping disguised into his visible sheepfold, are sore trials to them who have the oversight of his flock.

5. They who are employed in this ministry, may expect that some under their charge, or in their neighborhood, will readily be as scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes, and will glory in being so. The greater part only make light of the Lord's message, and go their way, one to his farm and another to his merchandize; but according to the parable, there is a remnant of malignants who endeavor to take his servants and entreat them spitefully, and slay them. A faithful minister of the gospel usually finds Satan, in some evil agents, standing at his right hand to resist him: some Alexander doing him much evil: some Diotrephes prating against him with malicious words: some Amaziah telling the supreme powers, that he hath conspired against them in the midst of their subjects, and that the land is not able to bear his words: some Pashur ready to smite him and put him in the stocks. The malice of such persons may for a time be concealed. "Also, thou son of man," saith the Lord to Ezekiel, "the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls, and the doors of their houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, come I pray you, and hear what the word is that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." They begin to smite

with the tongue, and proceed from one injury to another, till they are found joining in a cry like that which the Jews made against Paul, "away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live."

6. In Christ's own flock there is so much weakness, and so many disorders, as are frequently very grievous to his servants. Some, through simplicity, are led astray. Some are so easily provoked, that it is hard to make them live in peace with other church members. Some are timid and stand back, when their service is most needed. Some take offence when none is given; and a brother thus offended, is harder to be gained than a strong city: parties will inevitably arise in particular congregations, and though the beginning of strife may appear little, yet it is as when one letteth out water; a small opening being made for it, it makes a greater for itself, and sweeps all away before it. Scandals also happen through the falls of those concerning whom better things were expected, and great occasion is given to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. The reproof of sin is sometimes counted an injury rather than a kindness, and those against whom it is directed, would deal with the reprover as Asa did, if their power was as great as his. That prince is commended, as to the general tenor of his conduct, but when the prophet told him that he had done foolishly in relying on the Assyrians, not on God, who had delivered him from his most formidable enemies, in time past, he was wroth, and put the Lord's servant in a prison house, for, as the sacred historian adds, he was in a rage with him because of this thing. It is hard for ministers of the gospel, when they are assaulted from abroad, and vexed at home; enemies thrusting at them, and friends failing them. The persecution of Jews and Heathens never extorted such bitter complaints from Paul, as the disorders of the churches of Corinth and Galatia. The more he loved them, the greater was his grief at hearing ill news about them; but a succession of such afflictions may be expected by us. The tempest sometimes ceases, the sky is clear, and the prospect is desirable; but by and by the gathering clouds threaten a new storm; here we must watch, and labor, and fight, expecting rest with Christ in glory, not on the way to it.

7. Ministers of the gospel may expect that a faithful discharge of their duty, will render them very odious to the careless and profane world. Such will revile them, and speak all manner of evil against them, falsely, for the sake of the Lord Jesus. It has been so from the beginning. The captains of the host of Israel, seeing Jehu called aside by a prophet of

the Lord, they ask him, "wherefore came this mad fellow unto thee?" This was, it seems the style of the gay, the polite, and great in those times, and it hath never varied much. "I am," says Jeremiah, "in derison daily, every one mocketh me." "We are fools," says Paul, "for Christ's sake," so accounted of many, even of those who profess to be christians themselves. Many have been led astray, seeking to avoid this reproach of Christ. It is indeed painful to flesh and blood; yet the flattery of the world is more insnaring than its rage; its fair words undo more than its scornings; the love of its friendship rather than the dread of its displeasure, has been the prevailing evil in our times, and the more men employed in this ministry, have courted the favor of an ungodly world, they have in the righteous judgment of God, become so much the more contemptible in its eyes. "Them that honor me," says he, "I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." We serve him who was despised and rejected of men; they who sat in the gate, eminent in station, and famed for wisdom, spake against him; and he was the song of the drunkards; in their low and vile assemblies he was blasphemously derided; and if they thus entreated the Lord and Master, what will they not do unto his servants?

8. When any mischief is intended against the church, the first assault is usually made on those who bear office in it. The shepherd is smitten that the sheep may be scattered. We may learn from the account of the sufferings of the church under Ahab and other wicked princes, in Israel, that the first who were sought for destruction, were the prophets, the public teachers in those times. "They have," says Elijah, "slain thy prophets with the sword." Herod killed James, and designed to kill Peter. It was his policy to begin the destruction of the church, by the death of those whose life seemed most useful to it; and almost all who have succeeded him, in persecuting the Lord's heritage, have judged it prudent to begin where he began; of this, so many instances might be given, that the very enumeration of them would be reckoned tedious in a discourse of this kind. They who know any thing of the sufferings of the churches in Britain, in France, in Germany, in Bohemia and Hungary, since the reformation, need not be told that the fury of persecution, first lighted on the ministers of the gospel in these churches. They were commanded to be silent, they were imprisoned, were banished, condemned by some to a most cruel slavery in the gallies, and many of them put to death. In the latter

part of the preceding century, three hundred ministers of Christ were, by one law expelled from their flocks in Scotland: by another of the same kind near two thousand in England were forbidden to speak in the name of the Lord Jesus, except they would renounce the testimony they maintained against antichristian tyranny and superstition. The whole ministry of the reformed church of France, were driven out of that kingdom at once: and about the same time the protestant ministers in Hungary, were either exiled or sent to the gallies. The preaching of Christ awakes the rage of the Devil and his agents. They are ever devising evil against such as are dilligent and faithful in this work. A time-serving ministry may enjoy the friendship of the world, but they who testify against it, because, its deeds are evil, will be counted enemies.

9. Those of whom we speak, are sometimes reduced to no small hardship, as to the means of subsistence in this world. The great Elijah seemed at a loss to obtain daily bread, and had only an ill dressed meal brought to him by the ravens, while the prophets of Baal, and of the groves, lived on royal bounty; eating at Jezebel's table: but the little which Elijah had was so mercifully and wonderfully given to him, that it was inexpressibly better than their abundance. The Lord's witnesses lived in poverty, and were constrained to seek an hiding place in the wilderness, while the ministers of Antichrist rioted in the spoil of the nations, and by their magnificent appearance, attracted the admiration of the multitude. Our suffering ancestors, particularly those in the ministry, were at a loss for a little bread to support themselves and their families, while haughty Prelates, who persecuted them, enjoyed large revenues, and lived in equal splendor with the higher ranks of men. Let it be remembered, that the Lord of glory while he tabernacled with men on earth, had not where to lay his head. The high priests and doctors of the law, who were enemies to him, lived in ease and abundance, but he, though he was rich, yet for our sakes, became poor, that we through his poverty, might be made rich in the possession of an heavenly and eternal kingdom. It well becomes us for his sake, and for the sake of his church, to suffer the loss of all things in this world. The preaching of some Enthusiasts has made them rich; and corrupt church-men have been liberally provided for by corrupt statesmen; but the prophets, the apostles, and the faithful ministers of Christ in every age, and in every nation, have more frequently lived in

poverty than in great affluence. They have not received their good things in this life.

10. The last trial of this kind we shall mention, is not the least, nor the most uncommon. It is disagreement arising among brethren engaged in the same work of the ministry "Behold," says the Psalmist, "how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity;" but the more sweet this harmony and communion is, the more painful is any thing which mars, or even threatens to mar it. Paul and Barnabas, were for a long time intimately united as brethren and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. They labored, they suffered, they hazarded their lives together, to make his name known to the Gentiles, as if they had been animated by one soul; but a difference arose, and the contention became so sharp between them, that they departed asunder the one from the other. Paul appears to have been on the right side. The Holy Spirit gives us the reason of his judgment, which was doubtless of weight: of the other, it is only said, he was determined in his purpose. Moreover, the church of Antioch seems to have judged in favor of Paul, of whom it is said, he departed, being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God. This disagreement must however have been very grievous to both these men of God. Wounds from friends are more deeply affecting, and more dangerous than those given by an enemy. Yet it is almost, if not altogether impossible, in this imperfect state, to avoid them: through weakness, through mistake, and through indwelling corruption, we at times hurt others, and are hurt by others. The Lord's work may be carried on with harmony, but usually there will be either such disagreement among those employed in it, or such threatening appearances of disagreement among them, as sufficiently shews that unity of heart and mind in the cause and service of Jesus Christ, is not the effect of any wisdom and goodness in men, but a blessing from him who saith to the church, "thy watch men shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

III. Head, Which was to consider the mercy which preserves from fainting.

The trials which attend those who are employed in the ministry, are so connected with this mercy, that we could not well speak of the one without intermixing somewhat concerning the other. They never rightly applied themselves to the Lord's service who see not a peculiar need of mercy,

that they may be faithful in it. The idle servant neglects his master's work; in vain do you tell him of the aid he needs: he who encounters no danger, knows nothing of distress. The unfaithful servant provides as he thinks for himself. He relies on his own wisdom and foresight and takes the side he esteems most safe, or most honorable, or most agreeable to his own selfish designs. His resources are from within, himself, or from worldly policy, or from the friendship of men, or from the hope of acquiring fame; but he who has any just apprehensions of the greatness of the Lord whom he serves, of the importance of the work to which he is called, and of his own insufficiency, would sink under the burden, if mercy did not uphold him.

As to this part of the subject, the following remarks may be added.

1. Faithful ministers of the gospel have often found it a comfortable truth, that the way of the Lord is strength to the upright. Going forward in it, wisdom, courage and readiness of mind to the service of Christ, have been increased to them: while the outward man has been wasted by labor and care, the inward man has been renewed day by day. The hand of the dilligent in this heavenly work maketh rich. It may often be seen, that talents are doubled to those who lay them out for God, while they are taken away from the slothful. They who run, wax stronger and stronger, and they who linger, faint in the way. They who in this warfare flee from the enemy, are troden under his feet, and they who relying on the Lord set their face against the artillery of hell, out of weakness are made strong, wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies which sought to destroy them: They are indeed, weak in themselves, but Christ is mighty in his weak members. When difficulties appear before them, apparently insurmountable, it is then that they learn by faith to say to this and to that mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it is done.

2. Afflictions and temptations through the mercy of the Lord, are most profitable to his servants. Those do not waste their strength, but only shew them that it is in Christ, not in themselves. The assults of Satan, the opposition they find among those to whom they are sent, and their own manifold infirmities, appearing in every new trial, constrain them to have more frequent recourse to the throne of grace, and whatever sends us to this throne, is our advantage in the end. The enemy meant evil to Paul by buffeting him, but the Lord designed this for good to his servant. The trial was

servere, a thorn in the flesh; but it was necessary lest he should be exalted above measure. The instrument employed in afflicting the apostle was terrible—a messenger of Satan; but the Lord can make the worst of beings, the bitterest of enemies do us more service on some occasions, than the kindest friend we have on earth. The medicine which is very unpalatable, may be in certain cases the most salutary. Paul lived as he directed others to live, trusting in the Lord, and daily calling on his name; yet, this new affliction made him pray more earnestly. "For this," says he, "I besought the Lord thrice;" and the fruit of all was that he obtained more full assurance than ever, as to the Lord's carrying him comfortably through his work. "He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be made perfect, in weakness;" and he was more than ever reconciled to the work of Christ, and to the cross of Christ. Alas! how little of that self-denied and humble spirit is to be found among us in this generation? which moved him when he said, "therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak than am I strong." He learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content; but he neither attained what he had at once, nor did he in this life reach to the measure he desired. It is well if we are learning: the grace which taught him, is sufficient for us also. They who learn of Christ, shall most assuredly grow in heavenly wisdom: under his care may be found many weak beginners, many who are slow to understand, but none who are not making some progress toward that perfection to which he will infallibly bring them, the weakest and slowest not excepted.

3. The attempts made to interrupt the Lord's servants in their work, through his mercy, render them more useful. Paul was long in confinement; he seemed lost to the church. The malignant Jews might boast, that he was now restrained from that activity, for which he was formerly so remarkable, while he went from city to city, and from one nation to another, preaching Christ. But had they reason thus to boast? Verily no. "I would that ye should understand brethren," says he to the Philippians, "that the things which have happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds in Christ, are manifest in the palace, and in all other places, and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." His ministry was never so extensively useful as in his suffering at Rome. There

was a frequent intercourse between that city, and the remotest provinces of the empire: and people, from nations not subject to the Roman power, often resorted thither, some on one account, some on another. The cause of Christ was made known in a manner to all the world, when Paul was tried for his adherence to it in that celebrated city, and before the highest tribunal there: and his faith and constancy in suffering, encouraged other christians. John was banished to Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ: enemies intended that no church should enjoy the benefit of his labors, and in that retirement, the Lord made him useful to many churches. The wicked are snared in the work of their hands. The mischief they devise against the Lord's servants, is the destruction not of his kingdom, but of their own kingdom of darkness. They send Christ's messengers into exile, and know not that they are sending them to preach the gospel in other places, that the church may be enlarged. They imprison them and put them to death, and what is the consequence? The cause and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ have never more gloriously prevailed, than while his servants have resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

4. The Lord sets an invisible guard about his servants, when, according to human wisdom, there is no protection for them. It is remarkable, that such of them, as enemies were most intent to destroy, have ended their days in peace and honor. There was an uncommon diligence used to take away Elijah's life, yet the Lord so ordered it that he never died. The most eminent of those employed in the Reformation, whose destruction would have been more valued by Antichrist, than that of a thousand others, as Luther, Calvin, and Knox, men who feared no danger, and who made no excuse when their master called them to any perilous service, died in quiet; they hazarded their lives often, but through the Lord's goodness always escaped the hands of their enemies. Many in Corinth were set to hurt Paul, but the Lord assured him that no man should do so. And what was his defence? Not the number or power of his friends, but the favor of the Most High compassing him about as a shield. It seemed impossible for Elisha to escape, the army of the Syrians having invaded the land, of purpose to take him, and having beset the city where he was; his servant seeing this, said, "alas! my master, how shall we do?" But the prophet replied, "fear not, for they that are with us are more than they that are with them;" and the Lord in answer to his prayer, opened the eyes of the young man: he saw a more glorious host than

that of the Syrians—"the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Though we see not this guard with the eyes of our body, yet it is manifest to faith. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;" we need not therefore be afraid to go to all, to whom he shall send us, and to speak whatever he commands us.

5. When the Lord's servants seem to be left to the fury of their enemies, and are spitefully entreated and killed for his sake, he vindicates their cause. It is very dangerous to meddle with them while they are employed in his work, and, according to the measure of grace given to them, acting for him. The injuries done to any of his saints, he will account done to himself: of this, he gives them the most comfortable assurance; "he that toucheth you," saith he, "toucheth the apple of mine eye." As this is true concerning all who belong to Christ, so especially concerning those who are appointed to act as ambassadors for him. They appear weak, insignificant, and such as may with impunity be trodden under foot; but he is strong who will plead their cause, and execute judgment for them. The mocking of Israel at the Lord's messengers, and their killing of his prophets, brought wrath upon that nation. The miserable end of those who have molested the ministers of Christ, for their uprightness and steadfastness in his service, is a strong testimony of his regard to his servants. They are not alone, the Lord is with them while they stand for him: and they who fight against them know not what they do.

6. The Lord writes an abiding memorial of his mercy on the hearts of his faithful messengers, that they may without fainting, in the day of adversity, preach it to others. Ministers of the gospel finding themselves deeply indebted to free grace, the love of Christ constraineth them to endure all things for the elect's sake, and most gladly to spend and be spent in the service of him who loved them, and gave himself for them. Our Lord Jesus stood in no debt to us; we were worthy of death, we were polluted exceedingly, we were enemies to him; yet he engaged in our desperate cause, labored for us, bore reproach for us, was made a curse for us, and was brought into the dust of death for us. What is all that we can do, or suffer in his glorious and honorable cause? only a small testimony of our love to him; we can never repay him for what he hath done for us; we must be eternally in debt to him—a debt great beyond what the heart is able to comprehend, or the tongue to express; but any thing we do in his

service, the very least (was it only the giving of a cup of cold water for his sake) shall not lose its reward.

7. The mercy of the Lord abounds toward his servants in the time of their greatest need, in fiery trials, and in grievous perplexities. Moses was sore vexed with the murmurings and hard-heartedness of Israel; but he enjoyed pleasant days of communion with God; and when his trouble abounded, he was then admitted to the most near and frequent intercourse with his gracious Lord. Jeremiah might with as much propriety as any man of whom we have heard, adopt the Psalmist's language; "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up;" yet he was at times refreshed by manifestations of the Lord's goodness towards him, and towards the remnant of Israel; speaking of these he adds, "upon this I awaked and beheld, and my sleep was sweet unto me." Paul was called to appear at the tribunal of Nero, a very wicked and cruel judge, and as to man's aid he was left alone; no one had so much kindness for him, or zeal for the cause of Christ, as to stand with him, but all men forsook him; "notwithstanding," says he, "the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." He was most remarkably helped when he had no help of men at all.

8. As the Lord has sent his servants to instruct others concerning his mercy, so he usually instructs them for this service, by communications of it to themselves. They are frequently brought into afflictions, of which they complain as pressing them out of measure, above strength, in so much, that they despair even of life. Moses was once so discouraged under his burdens, and so grieved in his spirit at the iniquity of Israel, that he said unto the Lord, "if thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight, and let me not see my wretchedness." A new and unexpected trial made Elijah request for himself that he might die. The contempt and derision of the Lord's message by those to whom it was sent, made Jeremiah once forget the solemn charge given to him, to speak unto them all, that the Lord should command him, so far, that he said, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name," a very sinful resolution, in which he was not left to continue. The Lord does not leave his servants to perish in these deep waters. He comforteth them in all their tribulations, that they may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God.

They labor among the poor, the afflicted and the tempted, and it is necessary, that they be qualified not by speculative knowledge only, but by experience for dealing with such. This caused Luther to say, that study, prayer, and temptation, were requisite to fit one for being a minister of the gospel, and his remark is agreeable to that made by an higher authority; "whether we are afflicted," said Paul, addressing the Corinthians, "it is for your consolation and salvation, or whether we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation."

The improvement which we ought to make of this subject, has been in some manner declared already, we shall not insist much longer upon it. From what has been said we may see:

1. That ministers of the gospel are often exposed to trials, the severity of which they cannot well understand, who were never called to public employment in the church. The Apostle Paul, notwithstanding all his gifts and graces, thus addressed christians in his time: "Brethren pray for us." We who are so weak, have surely not less need, especially in this time of affliction and temptation, when the Lord has sore broken us in the place of dragons. and covered us with the shadow of death. Our trials are not indeed to be compared with those which many of the Lord's servants before us have endured, but they are heavy to us whose strength is so small.

2. We may see that those who live in ease, are not likely to be much useful in this ministry. If we should go through the whole catalogue of those who have been most eminent in the service of the gospel, we will find that they were taught in the school of affliction. Moses suffered a long exile in the land of Midian, and after this he had a great fight of affliction to endure in leading Israel through the wilderness. Paul was in deaths often. As the Lord's gracious designs in laying heavy burdens upon them, should reconcile all his people to the cross, so especially such of them as serve him in the ministry of the word: we can ill bear affliction, but we can less bear the want of it. It is fit that seeing we are called to instruct and comfort the afflicted, we ourselves should be taught to endure, as seeing him who is invisible.

3. We may from what has been said, see that ministers of the gospel ought not to bring up an evil report, upon their master's service, as if they were employed in a disagreeable and unprofitable task. The angels neither have, nor desire a more honorable employment than to do his commandments; they count it in no wise grievous, that they are all ministering

spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation. What then are men taken from our ruined family and sent to tell their brethren the good news of salvation through Christ, that they should murmur? This work may be despicable in the eyes of a profane generation, but in God's account it is the highest we can possibly be called unto. It may frequently happen, that through the rage of enemies and the instability of friends, through weakness in ourselves, and fierce assaults from without, our flesh has no rest, and we are troubled on every side; but God who comforteth those that are cast down, will not suffer us to be always afflicted, and never comforted. He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.

4. We may see that such as enter into this ministry, ought to count the cost ere they begin. They are most fully and expressly warned. What our Lord Jesus on various occasions said to his apostles, concerning the evil things which an ungodly world would do unto them for his name's sake, is to be remembered by all those whom he at any time calls to serve him in the work of the gospel. Is it to be expected, that going forth under the banner of the captain of salvation, his enemies will not assault us? No man enlists under the banner of an earthly prince or leader, but he must lay his account with fighting, and with the hardships which usually attend men engaged in a warfare. If we expect reproaches and sufferings in our Master's cause, and are through grace resolved to bear these for his sake, the day of trial will be less grievous to us.

5. We may see that love to the cause and work of Christ, will make the afflictions attending this ministry light to his servants. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it: the prospect of suffering and death, did not make him hesitate or linger in that great service he accomplished for us: the Evangelist Luke, observes that, "when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem;" he never went up with greater readiness to that city than he did the last time, when he knew that his hour was come, that he should be delivered into the hands of sinful men, who should scourge him and put him to death. Did he in love to the church thus yield himself to ignominy and sorrow? Did he for it become obedient unto death, even the accursed death of the cross? What then have we which is too valuable to be spent in its service? Paul did not count his life too much: "Yea," says he to the Philippians, "and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy

and rejoice with you all." "Hereby," says another apostle, "perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Let it be your prayer, that there may be a succession of faithful ministers of the gospel granted to us by the head of the church. The prophets, the apostles, the most eminent and useful servants of Christ do not continue by reason of death; but the Lord who sent them is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Ministers die, but the chief Shepherd lives, and by him this ministry is preserved. He takes the children instead of the fathers, and employs them in his service. He makes the spirit of those who are taken away, to rest on those who succeed them. He calls forth those who were most unlikely, and fits them for his work. Paul was once a blind Pharisee. Augustine was in his younger years an heretic of the worst kind, in his opinions, and a mere slave to the pleasures of sin in his life. Luther was for a long time, a devoted servant of Antichrist, ready as he owns to destroy any one who would have spoken but a word against that Man of Sin. Other eminent lights who labored in the great work of the reformation, were in like manner taken out of the dark kingdom of the beast. Our Lord Jesus will send, by whom he will send; from him we ought to ask the continuance of this ministry among us, and heavenly influence to accompany it.

It is most lamentable, that so many in this land live as heathens, utterly despising the ordinances of Christ; that so many are deluded by a false ministry—by teachers whom the Lord has not sent; that many are led astray by an unfaithful ministry—by men not upright and steadfast in their Master's cause; and that so many profit nothing by the word of God, though preached to them in some measure of plainness and purity. See that ye my brethren, do not provoke the Lord by sinning against the light, to take it away from you. Remember what he did unto Shiloh, for the wickedness of his people Israel. There is many a Shiloh to be seen without going so far as Palestine—places once favored of the Lord, but now in just indignation, forsaken by him. They are instructive monuments to us, calling us to take heed, lest we perish after the same example of apostacy from God.

The improvement which we all ought to make of this subject, is to rely on the mercy of the Lord as sufficient for us in all the service, and in all the sufferings to which we may be severally called, we do not glorify him while we think and

speak of him as an hard master, requiring much and giving little; he is plenteous in mercy; our afflictions may be severe, but they are of a passing nature; whereas to them who fear him, God's mercy never ends; let us therefore hope in the Lord, and when at any time we are brought into great depths, trust that he will bring us out of them, saying with the Psalmist, "thou Lord who hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. DAVID SOMERVILLE.

Of this eminent servant of Jesus Christ, I have been able to obtain but a very brief and general account. He was born in Scotland, west of Edinburgh, and after passing through the usual preparatory studies in the country, he entered the University of Edinburgh; having completed the usual academical course, he entered on the study of Theology, under the Rev. William Moncrief, at that time Professor of Theology for the Associate Synod of Scotland. After he was licensed to preach the gospel, he labored chiefly in the bounds of the Presbytery of Glasgow: and having received a call from the Associate congregation at Strathaven, he was ordained and installed there about the year 1769 or 1770. He labored there with distinguished success nearly twenty years; when, by a great loss of blood proceeding from the nose, he found himself unable longer to discharge the duties of the ministry in that place, he gave in the resignation of his charge to the Presbytery, which was accepted. He then took a journey to Ireland, where he remained but a short time. Having a brother, a merchant, in Baltimore, he was induced, in hopes of benefiting his health, by a change of climate and the sea voyage, to come to America. He brought his family with him. He united himself to the Associate Presbytery, on his coming here, and for some time preached, as his health permitted, in their vacancies in Pennsylvania and Virginia. But his health had been radically impaired—he survived his arrival in this country but a year or two. He died in Rockbridge county, Virginia, about the year 1793. The precise date of his coming to America, which, however, must have been in 1790 or 1791—the particulars of his death and the circumstances of his family, have not been ascertained by the writer of this sketch. All who have had any acquaint-

ance with Mr. Somerville, or knowledge of him, agree in bearing testimony to the excellence of his character, and his singular qualifications for usefulness in the church. The following brief delineation of his character, by the Rev. A. Whyte, of Argyle, N. Y., who was personally acquainted with Mr. Somerville, may be relied upon as correct :—"Mr. Somerville was a man whose heart was set on his Master's work, zealous for the truth, and bold in reproving sin and vice, and before he met with that loss of blood in Scotland, very popular as a public speaker. He was active in setting up social meetings for prayer and conference in his congregation—much given to secret and social prayer himself, carrying almost every thing to a throne of grace, and looking upward for direction in all his ways. He was a very active and useful member in church courts. He was sometimes liable to fall into fits of melancholy or depression of spirits; these, however, were not of long continuance—he would soon recover his wonted cheerfulness."

SERMON,

BY THE REV. DAVID SOMERVILLE.*

(Preached at Paisley, March 12, 1776.)

"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." (2 Corinthians iv. 5.)

My Reverend Fathers and Brethren—

Among the many names and designations given to the gospel minister in the sacred oracles, that of Ambassador is one: says

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* This sermon was published shortly after it was preached, to which was prefixed the following Preface by the Author:—

"This discourse was delivered on a day of humiliation observed by the ministers and other members of the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow, at Paisley; which humiliation day was unanimously agreed upon by them, at a meeting immediately preceding, when I was appointed by the Presbytery to prepare a sermon for the above occasion. Accordingly this discourse was prepared, and delivered at that time.—In studying I had not the remotest intention of publishing it: this resolution was afterwards formed in consequence of some who heard it expressing their sentiments of it, so as judging it might be of service to the public. With this sole design it goes from me. If, through the divine blessing, this end be gained, I desire through grace to give Him all the glory, who holds the seven stars in his right hand.—Though I am very far from pleading the merit of the discourse, the present mournful and degenerate state of religion in this land, among both ministers and people, presents but too good an apology for the publication. It is obvious to every one possessed of the smallest degree of spiritual and serious discernment, and not altogether infatuated and hardened, that this land, once famous for religion and reformation, and so the joy of all the churches, is now at this period as far sunk into apostacy and impiety, both in profession and practice. I have been long of the mind, as well as others, that many of those who are, by name and office, the public teachers of religion in this land, have a very deep and atrocious hand in actively contributing to the ruin of its interests; among other ways, by a long and unrelenting series of despotism and tyranny, in pressing and intruding upon the heritage of God with might and main, a set of corrupt, naughty and time-serving men. The wickedness and baleful effects of this conduct, openly and avowedly managed against Christ, the express letter of his word, and the spiritual interests of his church, is here in some measure delineated, that such men may in time be convinced of their hostilities against heaven, that the secure may be awakened, the deluded undeceived, the blind-folded delivered; that those who are hugging their chains and in love with their bondage, may be made sensible of the worth and value of their precious rights and liberties, and, in a word, that all *may* see, who *will* see the pernicious and soul-murdering tendency of that impious and furious course that

Paul to the Corinthians, "We are ambassadors for Christ." You know that it is the concern and ambition of an ambassador, to celebrate and highly commend his beloved prince; so it is the earnest concern and holy ambition of all the true and faithful ministers of the gospel to trumpet forth the transcendant glories and matchless excellencies of their princely Lord and Master, according to the certain, but self-denied declaration of his extraordinary ministers in the words of our text, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord."

Without spending time on the general nature of this epistle, or in giving the critical analysis of the preceding context, we may notice in the first verse what Paul says of their ministry, "Seeing we have this Ministry:" the meaning is not that they took or arrogated this ministry to themselves; no, they did not force or intrude themselves into the office of the holy ministry; nor were they intruded by others, but came meekly and peaceably into it, in consequence of a divine and immediate call from their sovereign Lord and Master. Notice also their furniture for their work set forth in these words, "As we have received mercy;" as they were appointed unto the very arduous and difficult work of preaching up a crucified Christ and preaching down pagan idolatry, they stood in need of and were furnished with a due proportion of strength from him that sends none a warfare on their own charges. In consequence of their being well qualified for their work, however onerous it was, they did not succumb under it, "We faint not:" as if he had said, However the opposition which we meet with from men and devils be very great and formidable, and such as flesh and blood in themselves could never withstand, yet our Lord and King is so kind to us, that he gives us all necessary and promised light and direction, strength and support, for the whole and every part of our work, and hence it is that we neither faint nor fail. It is easy to swim when the head is supported, it is easy to walk when strength is afforded: thus the godly Israelites of old, in marching up to their solemn feasts at Jerusalem from

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still prevails. If this discourse, however defective, shall be instrumental in the Lord's hand, in opening the eyes of any and conducting them in their religious exercise and profession to glorious Christ, to his word and to pure ordinances, and in that may be made faithful for him to themselves, and to a rising generation, much is gained, and let them bless the Lord.—If, after all that persons read here and elsewhere about sin and duty, they remain indifferent, hardened and secure, minding their own things and not the things that are Christ's, they will have themselves to blame, they have got warning. That the Lord's voice which breaketh the cedars in Lebanon, may awaken sleepy hearts, and enliven dead souls, is, and through grace, shall be, the desire of D. S."

distant corners, went from strength to strength unweariedly.

From the second verse of this chapter, it would appear, that some violent enemies to christianity had strained every nerve and exerted every effort, in traducing and reproaching both the office and doctrine of the holy apostles, and especially their manner of handling and setting forth the important and interesting truths of the gospel; from which the apostle takes occasion honestly to declare the naked truth, with reference to that wherein they were impeached; in the way of setting forth his own conduct and that of his fellow apostles, both *negatively* and *positively*; in which defence he gives them to know, that they were not practitioners in double meaning and dark hints, like cunning and crafty heretics, who had their own purposes to serve, but came fairly forth from behind the curtain, and exhibited the truths of God to men in the greatest simplicity, plainness and perspicuity, and in that way commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. This is true popularity indeed, every other species of it is delusory, false, and sinking.—They delivered nothing in their sermons, but what they firmly believed to be truth, under the express design, that the consciences of their hearers might be convinced and informed, and so judge and answer for themselves at the judgment of the great day, when ministers for their preaching, and people for their hearing, are to count and reckon to the just and omniscient Judge of all the earth.

As we apprehend that the second verse and the fifth, where our text lies, are more immediately connected, we shall supersede any formal consideration at this time of the third and fourth verses, and come to the words of our text; in which the apostles give us a demonstrative proof of their plainness, ingenuity and uprightness, in their manner of preaching the glorious gospel: say they, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." In which words we have the grand subject matter of gospel preaching, both *negatively* and *positively* expressed.

1. You have it *negatively* expressed, "We preach not ourselves:" As if he had said, Whatever false imputations and injurious insinuations are levelled against us, we honestly declare and can appeal that "we preach not ourselves." We neither preach from selfish principles, nor by selfish motives, nor to selfish ends. Self is neither the beginning, end, nor middle of our services; self is neither the source from which our sermons proceed, nor the end to which they are directed; self is neither the introduction, doctrine, nor application of

our discourses, nor any part of their design. That may be, and is, the case with these that have their necessary designs and sinistrous purposes to gain; but this is what we utterly and eternally disclaim and disavow as entirely incompatible with the great end and design of our sacred office, which was appropriated, and wherewith we are invested for another and more glorious purpose.

2. We have the sublime subject of gospel preaching declared *positively*, "We preach Christ Jesus the Lord:" The apostles were Christ's servants, and so preached up their Master; they were Christ's ambassadors, and so preached him up as their Lord and King; they were his apostles, and so preached up Him by whom they were called, qualified, ordained, and sent. This was the great end and design of their divine office and sacred commission, to publish their Master to the world as the true Messiah, the Christ of God, the Saviour of men. A crucified Christ was the all and all of their sermons, the Alpha and Omega of their discourses; they came forth in his name with the message of salvation to lost sinners; they appeared with the olive branch of peace to condemned rebels; they came forth with the gospel treasure in their hands, to dispense and give away to insolvent debtors; they preached a whole Christ, fully, freely, earnestly, and particularly, to sinners wholly lost in sin, drenched in iniquity, and sinking under the weight of the law's curse. To preach Christ is to explain, illustrate, and ministerially apply, the doctrines of the cross of Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant to the poor, perishing souls, by those lawfully called, duly qualified, and regularly ordained to that divine office.

For the further prosecution of this subject, we propose to observe the following method:

I. To speak of men preaching themselves.

II. Of ministers of the gospel preaching Christ.

III. Subjoin some practical improvement of the whole: All through divine assistance being administered.

I. The first head of discourse, according to the natural order of the text, is to speak of men preaching themselves. Here we shall specify some of the various ways in which men, under the character of ministers, preach themselves and not Christ. I hope that I will not be misunderstood by any of the audience, whether ministers or private christians, as if I entertained a suspicion of any of my fathers or brethren of this court being culpable in this respect, above what is incident to human weakness in this sinful and imperfect state. My reason for prosecuting this head of discourse is, not only

because that the text affords an obvious foundation for it, but also because that self-preaching obtains much in our day, a practice which the apostles of our Lord did so much disclaim, detest and abhor; at the same time it is a practice which the best are liable unto.

If the question then should be, When may it be said that men preach themselves? Answer,

1. When they preach at their own hand, or by their own authority, without being regularly called, or lawfully ordained to the divine office of the ministry. This was by no means the case with regard to Him who was the greatest preacher that ever set up a head in this lower world, who taught as never man taught, and who is now the prime minister of the upper sanctuary and true tabernacle. He took not this official honor upon himself, but was called of God, as was Aaron. "He glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest," (Heb. v. 4, 3.) He brought his credentials from the far country with him, which were confirmed once and again by a distinct and an audible voice from the excellent glory, in these words, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," (Mat. iii. 17, and xvii. 5,) which voice was issued through the clouds, both at his baptism and transfiguration on the mount. Neither was this the case with regard to his apostles; they continued toiling at their nets till they were immediately called by him who had full power and authority, saying "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." In consequence of their being thus called, they were, by the same authority, ordained to the more extensive exercise of their office in that commission which they obtained, after our Lord's resurrection, in these words, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them," (Mat. xxviii. 19.) For as they had from him an immediate call and divine inspiration, so also a universal commission; which badges of apostleship ceased with themselves, the great ends thereof being gained, the *divine* establishment of christianity, and the completion of the canon of scripture.

Neither is it the case with the true and faithful ministers of Christ in our day; they are regularly called, by the choice and election of the christian people, which right and privilege Christ our glorious king has disponed and bequeathed unto his professing people, in the charter of the kingdom, I mean the holy scriptures, as shall be afterwards instructed; and being thus called in a gospel manner by the christian people, of whose souls they have the oversight, and to whom belongs the sole and exclusive right of election, they are orderly or-

dained by the Presbytery, constituted in the name of the Lord Jesus, as Paul writes to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." (1 Tim. iv. 14.)

Still the question recurs, who are these that preach at their own hand, or by their own authority. We answer such as intrude themselves, or are intruded by others, into the holy office of the ministry, by the mere dint of ecclesiastical violence and church authority, screwed up to an antichristian pitch, in consequence of an expectant's obtaining a presentation to the legal benefice, by interest, moyen, or fervent supplication. Such persons have no gospel call from the christian people, (that they never expect,) but instead of that, gospel denial and a flat refusal. Though they have ordination from a Presbytery, the bulk of whom are of the same picture with themselves, yet that ordination cannot be to the pastoral charge, but to the lucrative living. For a pastoral relation cannot commence between (in the character of) a minister and a christian congregation, without a free, voluntary gospel call on their side. This pastoral relation can never take place according to the rules of the gospel, when the gospel call is wanting and absolutely refused. You all know, that one coming into the House of Commons as commissioner for a certain county, who had only three, instead of three hundred votes, would justly be expelled and hissed out of the house, as wanting authority for that commission, and as coming at his own hand; so, equally little authority for preaching and dispensing the seals of God's covenant, have these hirelings that come not in by the door of popular election, but climb up some other way. See such described in the Gospel according to John, (John x. 1—11,) by one that does not exaggerate matters, the Amen, the faithful and true witness. Such persons have no call from the people, and how can they have any call from Christ, since his call now is not to be known but as expressed by their election. Thus it is plain that they have no authority according to the scriptures; so they preach by their own authority; for ordination of the Presbytery in ordinary cases, without the election of the people, is only an empty designation. I had forgot one thing, it secures them of the benefice, the great object of their ambition. I heartily accord with the Reformed Church of Scotland, who tells us, in the books of discipline, that ordinary vocation to the ministry consists in election, examination and admission, namely the election of the people, and the examination and admission of the Presbytery. Also for the illustration of the above particular, it is

to be observed, that those of the sectarian way belong to the class of such as preach at their own hand, and so preach themselves; I mean illiterate and unqualified men, leaping at once from their servile employments into the office of the holy ministry, and arrogating the power of preaching and dispensing the seals of the covenant. In their defence they plead that though they want a regular course of education, so did the apostles. But in answer to this, the apostles were immediately called by Christ, as well as extraordinarily inspired by his Spirit, which these dare not pretend to; also by the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, they were taught to speak and preach in all languages; what we get by several years' hard study, they got, and much more, in one day.

They plead also that their preachers are ordained by the church as a collective body. But to this we reply, that their church, or as they style themselves, the community of the *faithful*, (a high title indeed,) cannot convey or communicate what they never possessed; how can they convey office-power to another, when they never possessed it themselves? that which a person has not, he cannot give away. But the community above never had or received this, of consequence *he*, called by them the lay-preacher, is clothed with no such office. Their conveyance of power to him to preach, and his exercising of that pretended power, may please themselves, and him, who is so fond to exhort; but at the best, it is but a solemn farce. I remember that king Uzziah, for, at his own hand, intromitting with the priestly office, was smitten on the forehead with a leprosy till the day of his death, and cut off from the house of the Lord. One would think that such a beacon of divine displeasure as this might deter such persons from breaking through divine limits. The times have been in the church of Christ when such religious adventurers, instead of being countenanced by any, would have been hissed and avoided by all. But when the evening shades stretch themselves, beasts of prey skulk abroad.*

2. Men preach themselves who preach for applause, and to display their own talents; when they preach to display their eloquence or fine and graceful speaking, and to display their oratory or fluency of language; and when they preach to display their dexterity in composition; showing how they

* Such as desire to see sectarian independency fully refuted, may consult a book entitled, The Original Constitution of the Christian Church, by Thomas Aiton, Minister at Alyth; and, The Synod of Jerusalem, a Sermon preached by the Rev. Mr George Muir, Minister at Paisley.

can preserve a steadiness of purpose, a fixedness of design, and a cohesion of parts through the whole—When they preach to show their warmth of address; how they can engage the attention, move the hearts, and inflame the passions of their hearers—When they preach in the expectation, and with the design, of being admired and celebrated for their profound and extensive knowledge of divine truths, not so much with the design of unfolding and illustrating divine doctrines, as to manifest and discover their acquaintance therewith. Whoever have these, or any one of them, for their ends in preaching, preach not Christ, but themselves. Have they eloquence? have they oratory? have they a vehemence of address? have they talents for composition or have they deep penetrating and piercing views of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? If so they should remember these levelling questions, proposed by an eminent apostle, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) These are humbling queries with a witness. Nebuchadnezzar, for his boasting of what he had received, was made to go and graze with the beasts. The oracles of truth furnish us with many striking stigmas fixed on pride. Pharaoh refused to bow so far to the command of God, as to let Israel go saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" The event was that he and his proud army sank like lead in the mighty waters. Haman was a proud haughty man, but though a great favorite of his prince to day, yet he was strung to-morrow on the very same gallows which he had erected for poor Mordecai. Herod, after his flaming oration, receives that applause from the people without any check, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man;" and forthwith the angel of the Lord smites him, and he is eaten up of worms. Ministers had much need to beware of showing their pride in preaching, for pride turned *angels* into *devils* and threw them from the heights of heaven into the depths of hell; being lifted up with pride they fell into condemnation. They had equal need to guard against hunting for popular applause; that is sometimes easily got, and is ordinarily as easily lost. But the faithful gospel minister is content, though he decrease, if his Lord and Master increase.

3. Men preach themselves when they preach their own inventions; when they preach vile errors and heresies; as refuting and impugning the capital doctrine of the supreme Diety of the great God, our Savior. Many are the attempts

that have been made to strike this precious pearl off Christ's crown, or rather the crown itself, but by a kind of spiritual repercussion all these strokes at this great truth have rebounded or will rebound, with redoubled vengeance on the heads of these ungrateful and virulent enemies, No weapon formed against this truth has prospered. These are Christ's great enemies; and his Father says, that he will clothe his enemies with shame. Those that deny his supreme Deity, whatever friendship they pretend to him, and whatever pompous, names and swelling titles they give him, are enrolled in the black list of his enemies, and will, if they die in that belief be dealt with as such by him on another day, when he renders to every one their due. This is one of the capital links in the chain of divine truth, and if this link is struck out, the whole chain is broken. The enemy of our salvation has the sagacity to know, that if this leading truth be undermined, and men disbelieve it, then the whole body of the Christian religion, as to them, is unhearted. In that case he will take special care to give them no disturbance either in their praying or preaching, but encourage them in both, as well knowing, that if they go off the stage in this sentiment, he is quite sure of them as his prey. My friends, if this "foundation be destroyed, what hath the righteous done?"*

Also men preach their own inventions, when they preach down the doctrine of his eternal Sonship, the doctrine of his suretyship and satisfaction, the doctrine of divine, absolute and eternal decrees; when they preach down the doctrine of original sin; when they preach up the five Arminian articles, as, that God elected men only conditionally; that men in their fallen state have a freedom of will to what is spiritually good; that Christ died for all men; that the grace of God is resistible; and that real saints may fall totally and finally away from a state of grace—When they preach so as not to rid marches between the law and the gospel, but confound them by teaching their auditory that the gospel is a new remedial law, distinct from the moral law; that sinners must be so and so qualified before they come to Christ; that till they are convinced of their sins, repent and perform a course of resolute obedience, then, and never till then, ought they to trust in the merits of Christ: dreadful, shocking doctrine!—When they preach not the doctrines of the cross, but constantly harp and twine on the dry and sapless shreds of pagan morality and substitute these in the room of the pe-

* We cannot on this truth of the last importance, but recommend Wishart's Theology, 2 volumes; and Sloss on the Trinity, a valuable book.

culiar doctrines of the gospel, as regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification through faith in his imputed righteousness, and sanctification by his grace.—When these weighty doctrines are exploded as trite and unfashionable, and the above foisted in their room, then men preach their own inventions; and when good works are preached up without showing the necessity of the new nature, and vital union to Christ, to the acceptable peformance of them.

Further, when men fill up their sermons with airy reasonings and dry philosophical speculations, instead of the rich, savoury and saving truths of the blessed gospel—When they clothe their sentiments with scholastic phrases and terms of art; and affect to shine by the cadence of the voice, the rounding of their periods, and by a florid style and South-British accent: all this is a preaching of their own inventions and so a preaching of themselves.

We do not mean hereby to appear for a mean, low, grovelling and contemptible style; not for the puerile, but affected bombast, which is a sure sign of a weak mind, the certain test of a novice, and which is universally detested by every person of sound sense and solid discernment. A diamond appears with most advantage in its native color, whereas, paint it, and its beauty is lost; so to paint up the gospel with the varnish of human art, it is the intention of the work if not of the agent, to vail its beauty, to conceal Christ, and exhibit self. It is just to lay Christ and his glorious gospel in the swadling clothes of human art and vile pride.

For men to preach up the above named or other errors, they thereby *murder* both themselves and their hearers. To preach up philosophy, that is both to *starve* the preacher and the souls of his charge.—For him everlastingly to harp on cold morality, that is a *wearying* of both himself and them, in the greatness of their way. Those that set off the gospel under the dress of an affected style and modish pronunciation, thereby display their vanity, exhibit their pride, but all agree in preaching themselves.

4. They preach themselves when they preach their own passions and prejudices. When men in that sacred office, in consequence of their having conceived a prejudice against some person or persons, come forth to the public all in fire, flame and fury, when they exert their every effort to obtain satisfaction, by the dint of railing and inflammatory speeches, for the personal abuse which they apprehend to have received. True it is that the faithful minister of Christ, will see it his duty from the Lord's word, from his ordination vows, the relation which he stands in to his flock, and the account

which he has to make of them to his Master: from these obligations he will see it both his duty and his interest to give distinct and faithful warning against the errors and heresies from which they are in danger, against the vices which they are ready to be ensnared by, and against the delusions which they are like to be captivated with; in such cases he will see himself firmly bound to set the trumpet to his mouth, and to cause it to give a distinct and certain sound, to "cry aloud and spare not, to show the Lord's people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins;" (Isaiah lviii. 1,) to tell them plainly whether they will hear or whether they will forbear and thereby deliver his own soul, and them that hear him, or render them inexcusable; for the gospel like the glorious author of it, "is set for the rising and falling of many in Israel." The gospel minister will take care not to be like those "dumb dogs that cannot bark," mentioned by the evangelical prophet, so called, because they are so *fat* and *lazy* that they cannot *bark*. Though the gospel minister will take care that he be not like these false prophets in Jeremiah's time, that spake to the people smooth things, and prophesied deceits; yet at the same time, vastly different from this faithful, discreet and well tempered zeal, is that wildfire of passion, which actuates men in this character, sometimes even in the public, into rapture and rage, arising from personal insult and private injury. The wise gospel-minister, though he will be bold and resolute in the cause of his Master, as a lion, yet he will be meek and calm, in his own, as a lamb.

5. They preach themselves, when they preach for the sake of filthy lucre or worldly gain, such as those that set out, and come into the holy ministry for a piece of bread; who use every possible artifice to obtain the great thing aimed at, a presentation, though it should be at the expense of winking at the vices, and laughing at the impieties of the gentleman; (for expectants and dependents must not disoblige their superiors, lest it should prove fatal:) Well, when the grand point is secured, a legal right to the benefice got, *in* they come to the parish with the greatest resolution, or rather infernal impudence; and on the *solemn day* when the relation is to be fixed between the presentee's person and the living, that none of the *trusty brethren* may meet with bodily harm, it is judged a good precaution at times to be well guarded with military force: very unlike the kingdom of our royal Prince, which, as himself declares, "is not of this world." He refused the use of swords when his enemies came to apprehend him, yet swords must be drawn at the settlement of

his ministers, we mean, such as are only so in name, or by habit and repute.

But all is now right, the man is installed and the *solemnity* is over; what is the consequence? It is very mournful: Instead of being active and faithful in feeding the souls that many think are committed to his charge, *he*, like a dog when his belly is full, *lies* and *lulls* and *slumbers* and *sleeps;* he feeds himself and not the flock: See this case described at great length by the Spirit of God, Ezekiel 34th Chapter throughout, which I beg you will consult. Such also belong to this class, who, when they have crept into the holy ministry, and find not their living commensurate with their insatiable desires, are quite restless till they have it augmented, or themselves transported, and, as it were, set up themselves to the *roup*, and the highest bidder is preferred. How can they but make merchandize of souls, when they make a sale of themselves!—These are some of the various woful ways, in which men preach themselves. But we pass on to the most substantial and savory part of the text.

II. The other head of discourse was, to speak of ministers preaching Christ. Having shown what it is to preach self, without insisting on other things that would naturally offer upon this general head, we shall only endeavor to show how, and in what manner, Christ is to be preached. This in the following particulars.

1. Christ is to be preached *fully*. All the doctrines revealed, ordinances erected, statutes appointed, and commands enjoined, by his royal authority, are to be preached.

More particularly, all the truths of God respecting his nature, will and perfections; all these respecting the Deity, personality, and subsistence, of the three persons of the adorable Trinity; respecting their coequality one with another, and their coagency in the stupendous work of redemption, are to be preached up.—Also all the truths of God respecting man, in his state of primitive innocence, his fallen state by sin, his recovered state by Christ, and his state of consummate happiness in glory, are to be displayed.—All the truths respecting the covenant of works, as the parties, the making, the condition, the breach of it, and the consequent misery are to be preached: All the truths respecting the covenant of grace, the parties, the making, the condition and administration of it, are to be opened.—Likewise every truth respecting the undertaking, the nature, the person, the offices, the righteousness, the suretyship, the satisfaction, the fullness and glory of Christ, must be preached.—All the truths of God

respecting the contrivance, the purchase, the application and consummation of redemption, are to be exhibited.—In a word, every truth respecting the doctrine, worship, discipline, government, and christian practice of the Church of Christ, are to be insisted upon, as set forth more largely in the scriptures of truth, and more briefly in our excellent standards, the Westminister confession of faith, the catechisms, larger and shorter, directory for worship, and form of Presbyterial, church-government. I do not say that it is in the power of any minister on earth to preach fully and minutely, every one of these truths ; but the meaning is, that nothing is to be kept back by design; we are not to shun to declare the whole counsel of God. Ministers are expressly enjoined, in a solemn charge from their sovereign Lord and King to "go and teach all nations; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," (Mat xxviii. 19, 20.) As a certain judicious divine observes, our Lord does not say "Be sure to instruct them in the essential and fundamental articles of my holy religion, the knowledge and belief of which are necessary to salvation; but as to matters of less consequence, which I have taught and enjoined the observance of, you are left at liberty to preach them or not, as may best suit your different tempers and inclinations, consists with your worldly ease and interest, or be reckoned most expedient for maintaining peace and unity among yourselves."—No, the divine mandate is peremptory and positive: Teach them to observe *all things*, whatsoever I have commanded you. As the whole uniform system of divine truth is to be received observed, kept pure and entire, so the same entire system must be preached and taught, not only as it respects the doctrine and worship, but discipline and government of the house of God ; See for this the explicit charge which the prophet Ezekiel got ; says the Lord to him, "Show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings-out thereof, and the comings in thereof; and *all the forms* thereof, and *all the laws* thereof, and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof and do them." (Ezek. xliii. 11.) Does it not merit our strict attention here, as what sets the matter in a clear point of view, namely, the frequent repetition of the precept, as if particularly intended to obviate the common objection, or rather vulgar prejudice, that it is not material whether the truths of God referring to the order and government of Christ's Church, be preached and taught, or not, in regard that they are not *essentials*, or because that the knowledge and

observance of them are not absolutely necessary to salvation. If any divine ordinance, or any thing relative to the house of God, may be accounted trivial and of an indifferent nature, it would be the entering in and the going-forth of the house; yet these, and every one of them, the prophet is ordered to show, and the people to keep, mark well, and observe diligently. This generation indeed is in general ignorant of these truths, and firmly prejudiced against them, (I mean relating to the order and government of the house of God;) what then? Are they for that reason not to be taught and preached up in their proper place? By all means they are. If the bulk are ignorant of, they have the more need to be instructed in them; if they are prejudiced against them, there is the more need to detect and expose the sin and danger thereof, whether they will hear or forbear. The gospel minister is not allowed to act arbitrarily, as to what divine truths he is to teach, and what not; the whole sacred *depositum* of divine truth is to be taught and illustrated. If so, it is not for ministers always to dwell on these subjects which they are best acquainted with, most familiar to them, or that please their people best. They are for the farther instruction of their people, "to bring out of their treasure things new and old."

2. Christ is to be preached purely, without the alloy and mixture of error. What the apostle James says so warmly to the scattered tribes, he surely says to gospel ministers, "Do not err my beloved brethren," (James i. 16.) Timothy is not only instructed what to preach, but commanded to charge others, "that they teach no other doctrine; to withdraw himself from those that teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; and to hold fast the form of sound words, which he had heard of Paul." But is it not matter of deep lamentation, that the time has come upon this poor land, foretold by Paul to Timothy, (1 Tim. i. 3. vi. 3, 5, 20, 21. 2 Tim. i. 13,) "when many will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers having itching ears?" which itching ordinarily ends in a scab, either on the person's profession, or practice, or both, of which our land swarms with many sad instances, though of the truth of this they are neither sensible nor will be persuaded. Is it not matter of deep regret, that the very times foretold by Peter, have overtaken us? Says he, "There were false prophets among the people," (namely the Jews) "even as there shall be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord

that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction, and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Is not every person of sound, solid, and spiritual discernment, sensible that this national church, in many corners, is swarming with the vermin, (as Addison styles the free-thinkers and infidels in his time,) of Deistical, Arian, Socinian, Pelagian, Arminian, Neonomian and legal teachers, and sectarian dreamers.* The baleful effects of this motley herd are, thereby the eternal Jehovah is provoked, glorious Christ is set at nought and wounded in the house of his professed friends, the Holy Spirit is grieved, the word of God is corrupted, the meaning of it perverted, our standards as tests of orthodoxy ridiculed, poor souls murdered and swept away as with a land flood, a rising generation trained up in gross ignorance, their minds impregnated with error, and so a foundation thereby laid for the reception of other abominations, that the common enemy of our salvation may be permitted to disseminate, as Prelacy, Popery, yea Pagan darkness.

In this glass, at once, you may see what a mercy from God the Secession is (in which there obtains a stand for truth) to a land, sinking into ignorance, error and delusion, and veering fast back to the black shades of heathen darkness. This proclaims aloud the absolute necessity of faithful ministers preaching doctrines, springing pure from the crystaline fountains of divine truth; for it is only pure ordinances that God has promised to bless for the salvation of souls; it is only the pure waters of the sanctuary at which souls will drink and be refreshed, and by no means at the waters puddled and fouled by the feet of the Priests.

3. Christ is to be preached *plainly*, to the capacities of hearers. The apostle of the Gentiles tells the Corinthians, "My speech and preaching was not in enticing words of man's wis-

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* For the benefit of such as know not the meaning of these heretical names, we explain them. Deists are such as deny or doubt the divinity of the scriptures. Arians deny the Son of God to be equal with his Father. Socinians maintain that our Lord Christ had no existence before his incarnation; that the design of his death was to ratify his miracles, confirm his divine mission and doctrine, and to give us an example of patience and resignation in afflictions and death, but entirely refuse that his death was intended by him as a satisfaction to the justice of God, or an atonement for the sins of an elect world: They affirm also that baptism is only an external badge of christianity, but not a seal of the covenant. Pelagians deny the doctrine of Original Sin and Adam's federal headship. The five articles of the Arminians are in the first head of this discourse. Neonomians maintain that the gospel is a new remedial law, distinct from the moral law, and that faith and repentance are gospel precepts. Sectarians include Independents, and that *scheme of confusion* called, the Kirk of Relief.

dom, but in the demonstration of the spirit and of power." As ministers are to take care that the matter be *pure*, so also that the manner be *plain*. No doubt it would be a matter very easy for such as have been privileged with a liberal course of education, to express themselves in dark, cramp and scholastic terms, so that hearers might sit and notice the sound, but not take up the sense: To what purpose? Says Paul, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Wide is the difference between five words and ten thousand, yet five plain words are better in every respect than ten thousand words that cannot be understood. Ministers are to commend the truth to every man's conscience, but, ere that be done, it must be plain to their understanding. Indeed every one clothed with the sacred character, has not the faculty of conveying his sentiments, with the same degree of plainness and perspicuity as others, yet if he study to be plain, they will be understood; but if he *design* to be dark, he deserves not to be heard.

4. Christ is to be preached *diligently:* Thus Apollos did. Concerning him, we are told, "he was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." (Acts xviii. 25.) Thus Paul enjoined Timothy "to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." This, of preaching Christ dilligently, not only implies that gospel ministers are to be ready to embrace every call that God, in his providence, presents them with, of preaching Christ, but we apprehend that it includes a conscientious diligence in our studies and preparations for public ministrations. David would not serve God with that which cost him nought, but occupied his time in the service of his God. Ministers are by name and office the servants of the church, if so, their time is their people's, of consequence, for them to alienate their time from their books and studies, to farming and husbandry, is to rob their people of their just property. I remember that Paul enjoins Timothy to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.". (1 Tim. iv. 13.) But very unlike this is the conduct of many clergymen in our time, who, instead of shining in the character of preachers cut an excellent figure in that of husbandmen. If men's hearts lie away from their office, they must eagerly pursue some other object. Ordinarily the most diligent is the

most successful minister. On the other hand it is a just observation of Solomon, that "by much slothfulness the building decayeth," and "through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through:" which may run thus, Through much indolence the minister grows weak, and through much inactivity his sermons become stale. Many have lost good talents, by not exercising them; and many have got large ones, by improving their little stock: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," holds true, both with respect to the private christian and gospel minister: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath." (Mat. xxv. 29.)

5. Christ and his gospel are to be preached *wisely*, that is, we are not only to suit and adapt ourselves to the capacities, but also to the different cases of our hearers. The ignorant are to be instructed, the secure are to be awakened, the weak are to be strengthened, the tempted are to be succoured, and the dejected are to be comforted: Hence says the Lord, (Isa. xl. 1,) "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." The fierce and the obstinate are to be reproved; with some we are to make a difference, using meekness with one, and sharpness with another. Thus our apostle demeaned himself: Says he, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are able." (1 Cor. iii. 2.) Thus as wise stewards, we are to give every one a portion in due season. This wisdom we must seek from him who has the tongue of the learned, that we may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; from him, who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and has engaged himself by promise to his servants, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

6. Christ is to be preached *boldly:* Thus we find that when Paul urges the church at Ephesus to watch with prayer, with all perseverance and supplication, he requires them to be very mindful of him. Says he, "And *for me*, that utterance may be given *unto me*, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." (Eph. vi. 19.) Courage and resolution, you know, become the ambassador of a prince, so on many accounts they are requisite in the ministers of Christ: On account of the red dragon, they are necessary, who, when his chain is lengthened, labors with might and main, to fill them with unbelieving fears, and dejection of spirit, arising from their weakness, their wickedness, and the weight and burden of their work. This enemy one while la-

bors to blow them up with self-conceit, and another while to sink them into despondency, suggesting to them that they will surely succumb in their work, to the ruin and reproach of it; or that their ministry has no success, and it is in vain for them to persist any longer in it; or that their people are tired of their services. Various are the projects which he drives. Also, on account of the world, and especially the wicked of the world, is this holy courage necessary, who do what in them lies to outbrave the gospel minister, and to look him out of countenance. In a particular manner they do so, if he studies faithfulness. They also need much of this gracious resolution, on account of the trials and hardships which they meet with from other quarters; for without are fightings, and within are fears. Hence says Paul to Timothy, "Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. ii. 3.) The courage and holy boldness which they need is the fruit of a strong faith, like that of the three heroic youths, who, when threatened with a furnace seven times hotter than usual, possessed their souls with the greatest fortitude and intrepidity. This holy courage makes gospel ministers to triumph in the person, power, promise, righteousness and blood of Christ, their Master; over sin, the curse of the law, the world, the devil, death and hell.

7. This glorious person is to be preached *zealously*, that is, out of fervent love to Christ and the souls of men: Says an apostle, "The love of Christ constraineth us;" and elsewhere he says, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." I will, with the greatest cheerfulness, expend all my time, my strength, my talents, my all, for your conversion, edification and salvation; and says he, "My little children, for whom I travail as in birth, till Christ be formed in you." This zeal also includes fervent love to Christ, which manifests itself many ways, as vehemently breathing after his company, rejoicing in his presence, mourning in his absence, grieving over the dishonors and insults which he meets with in his person, glory, truth or members; and in highly extolling him to the souls of men, in his natures, offices, righteousness, fullness, covenant, names and relations; that they may be prevailed upon to give up themselves to him, to believe on him with the heart, and confess unto him with the mouth. In a word, that they may be prevailed upon to renounce sin as their trade, the devil as their master, the world as their portion, the wicked of it as their companions; to take God as their portion, Christ as their saviour, the Holy Ghost as their sanctifier and guide, the word of God as their rule, the Covenant of Grace

as their charter to the heavenly inheritance, his providence as their lot in the world, and his people as their intimates; and in that way devote themselves to Christ in all that they are and have, to be his only, wholly and for ever, saying to him, as he to his Father, "All thine are mine, and mine are thine."

Lastly, Christ is to be preached *faithfully;* This is a qualification absolutely necessary and requisite for the gospel minister in preaching Christ. Thus the Lord to Jeremiah, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." (Jer. xxiii. 28.) Thus speaks the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, to the angel of the church in Smyrna, (namely a gospel ministry there,) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10.) So Paul to the Corinthians, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." This faithfulnes in preaching Christ and his gospel, is so necessary a qualification, that, in a sense, it is the sum total of all. This faithfulness is to have a chief place, and must never be wanting, otherwise ministers cannot miss to be unsavory to God, and hurtful to souls. A weak minister, if he is faithful, Christ will support and countenance in his work; while an able minister, and yet unfaithful, will be despised and overlooked: "He that knows his master's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." The abilities of a minister, without faithfulness, qualify him only to hurt his flock, while less abilities with faithfulness, will be blessed, and rendered successful.

The faithfulness so much required in a gospel minister, takes in pure spiritual aims and designs, in coming into, and continuing in, the sacred office of the ministry; hence says the apostle Peter, "Feed the flock of God, that is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." It comprehends a heart attachment to the whole truths of Christ, and his work in the church. It is absolutely necessary that the ministers of Christ be of one mind, as to their principles and profession, particularly as to these truths that are controverted by others, that they may support and strengthen one another's hand in the way and work of God, by setting shoulder to shoulder, in carrying on the same common cause of truth, against the same common enemies of it. Whereas when a diversity of sentiment about the great lines of truth, or our christian profession, comes to obtain among ministers, and these disseminate among the people, it is easy to see the rueful effects that must inevitably follow, as discord, contention and breach of

communion, which cannot, according to the gospel, be held without union of sentiment, as well as oneness of affection; so Paul prays in behalf of the christians at Rome, that they "may with one mind, and with one mouth glorify God." (Rom. xv. 6.) Says he to the Corinthians, "Now, I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. i. 10.) The party that prevails in this land, in point of numbers, may just take a view of one of their sacramental solemnities, in the glass of this scripture last cited; and, through that prospect, you will see, perhaps, of ministers one or two, that aim at preaching the gospel, and also four or five, that are confessed by all the country to be Arminian, corrupt and unsound in the faith; and of people, you will see numbers, that keep the worship of God regularly in their families, evening and morning, and great numbers that observe it only in the evening; and you will see a band of gentry that have banished it out of their families both evening and morning; concerning such the Lord speaks, with a vengeance, "I will pour my fury on the heathen, and the families that call not on my name:" and yet such win as far *ben* to the sacramental tables, as the most tender christian. A motley communion, with a witness! A tender christian giving the elements of bread and wine, the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood, into the hands of an avowed, practical heathen! Farther, this faithfulness includes impartiality in the whole of their ministrations, in not only turning the edge of their ministry against the errors vented in their time, but against the evils and corruptions that may be obtaining in their bounds; as lying, cursing, profane swearing, minced oaths, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, drunkenness, dissimulation, detraction, cheating and over-reaching. When the minister honestly and plainly levels his discourse against these abominations, he needs not be surprised though he meet with much opposition from wicked men; for the more faithful he is, the more of their wrath he will often incur. Thus when Paul preached against the idolatry of Ephesus, the whole city was in an uproar. Also this faithfulness implies steadfastness and perseverance in their attachment to the truth, and impartiality of their ministrations, even unto the end: "Be constant and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," not only in a calm and serene day, when they are meeting with little or no opposition, but in a day of trial and tribulation, for it is through manifold tribula-

tions that they must enter the kingdom. "Blessed are they," says our Lord, "that shall not be offended in me. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

III. We come now to make some practical improvement of what has been said on this subject, in the following inferences:

1. From what has been said, we may all see the pitiful and blind delusion of such as at their own hand, and by their own authority, assume to themselves the name and office of the ministers of Christ, whether hirelings or sectarians. As for the first of these, they, in many corners of the land, have fallen under deserved contempt and disgrace. What the Lord did with the corrupt and wicked priests in the time of the prophet Malachi, he has in justice verified on them, in making them contemptible and base before all the people, because they have not kept his ways, but have been partial in the law. The times have been, even in the memory of many among us, when the worthy predecessors of these *heavy* incumbents, had their churches; and divine ordinances, as dispensed by them, were regularly attended, their ministry highly and justly esteemed. Why? Because (as one expresses it) their pulpits were then filled with a Paul, a Peter, a Barnabas, and an Apollos, that is, judicious, holy, and faithful ministers of the gospel; whereas in our times, these churches are deserted, ordinances there dispensed are abhorred: very justly. Why? Because these pulpits are weekly occupied by Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, and even by Portius, Cato or Hamlet. How can they have the esteem and respect of their people, when they press into the ministry in the way of combatting with the whole parish, the patron and a few of his dependents excepted? In such case, it is, be it known to all men, their highest aim, a piece of bread. The language of these time-servers is precisely the same as that spoken by the man of God: says he, "Every one that is left, shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver, and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." (1 Samuel ii. 36.)

As for those parishes that respect and esteem their intruders, and such as have an active hand in intruding others, (for there is no difference between the two;) what I say to this case, is in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. v. 31.) A very interesting and so-

lemn query, indeed! a query, which those to whom it is put, may think upon at their leisure, ere it be too late.

As for those of the sectarian order, who assume to themselves the sacred title of ministers of the gospel, they openly proclaim what they are, in the virulent attacks which they make upon our excellent Confession of Faith and Catechisms, which have stood, and will stand, as a brazen wall in defence of the truth, when their dreams and delusions will be sunk into oblivion. In some of their churches this practice obtains, of demanding and getting the history of the conversion of such as propose to join them; thus they foster one another in hypocrisy and self-deceit, and which is worse, in taking Christ's work out of his hands, in judging others before the time. However, the scheme of lay-preaching will do for those that are wearied of the employments which God in his Providence has placed them in, and keenly desire to commence exhorters to display their parts.

2. From this subject we also infer, that none are lawful ministers of the gospel, that come into that office wanting the call of the christian people, of whose souls they have the oversight, and among whom they labor in word and doctrine; for, from the sacred scriptures, the people have a *divine right* to choose their own pastors; as shall be instructed, from the two or three scriptures following:

The first scripture which I mention is Acts i. 15, and downwards; where we read of the election of Matthias to be an apostle. The disciples of our Lord being gathered together to the number of a hundred and twenty, the apostle Peter stood in the midst, and told them, It was needful that one should be chosen to fill up the room of Judas, taking part in the ministry with the other apostles, who was to be a witness with them of the resurrection of our Lord; and they, namely, the hundred and twenty, appointed or made choice of two, to wit, Barsabas and Matthias; and when they had prayed to the omniscient, heart-searching Lord, that he would show which of these two, whom they had chosen or appointed, was the meetest person for the office of an apostle, then they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell to Matthias, upon which he was numbered with the eleven apostles. As Matthias was to be an extraordinary office-bearer in the church of Christ, he had the choice and consent of his church, that his election might be a precedent in future ages. This is the first New Testament instance of the choice of an office-bearer in the church of Christ, wherein men were concerned, and so we may rationally conclude, that surely it was designed of

the Lord for a rule and precedent to his church in times coming. Had it not been so designed, we may justly conclude, that the sovereign King of Zion would have immediately called Matthias to his office, as he did his other apostles, which had been full as easy as sending Peter with a message to the one hundred and twenty to elect two, that one of them might be chosen by lot. In the election of Matthias, the people did all that could be done by men in that affair; they elected two and did not nominate the individual person, not because they were not the source of elections, but because the person to be elected was to be put into the *apostolic* office, and so it was requisite that an apostle should be elected in an extraordinary way.

A second scripture proving the people's right in this matter, is Acts vi. 2—6, where we read of the apostles calling the multitude of disciples to them, and exhorting them to look out among them seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom they might appoint over that business, to wit, of taking care of the poor, collecting for them, and seeing to the distribution of the church's charity. As the command was pleasing to the whole of the disciples, or of the Lord's people, (for that was the name whereby they were then called;) so now the choice being wholly left to them, as what from Christ did belong to them, they therefore elected the seven, and set them before the apostles to be ordained by them. The disciples, or Lord's people, had right from Christ to choose their own deacons; therefore say our Protestant divines, *a fortiori*, much more have they a right from Christ to choose their own ministers, to whom they are to commit the charge of their precious souls. The judicious Durham calls this scripture a clear evidence of a people's interest in their calling of a minister. Dr. Owen, who, I believe will be owned by all that know his works, to be an eminent divine, affirms,* "That it is impossible that there can be a more convincing instance and example of the free choice of ecclesiastical officers, by the multitude and fraternity of the church, than is given us herein; nor was there any ground or reason why this order and process should be observed, why the apostles themselves should not nominate and appoint persons, whom they saw meet for this office, to receive it, but that it was the right and liberty of the people, according to the mind of Christ, to choose their own officers, which right, the apostles would not abridge or infringe." The argument is

* Nat. and Gov. page 60.

strong here from the less to the greater; for, if the people have a right from Christ, to choose deacons, to dispose of the poor's money, much more may we conclude, that they have a right from him, to choose the overseers of their immortal souls.

A third scripture to this purpose, is Acts xiv. 23. Our translators render that verse thus, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, &c." which translation is *unjust*, for the words in the original run thus, χειροτονησαντες δε αυτοις πρεσβυτερους κατ' εκκλησιαν, which were rendered in our old translation, thus, "When they had ordained them elders by election in every church:" By election, to wit, of the people in those churches, over whom the apostles ordained elders or Presbyters, that is, ministers. This text in the Geneva translation was rendered, "Chosen by suffrages, by lifting up of the hands," which is the very thing in the original, as all those acquainted with the Greek language know. Every person, of any discernment, sees the argument from this scripture to be conclusive. One observes, that the calling of gospel ministers being a matter of great moment to the churches of Christ, he, who is faithful in all his house, has appointed who shall be the callers. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness—that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2. Tim. iii, 16, 17.) But, says he, If Christ has not determined this in his word, let us never talk more, of the perfection of the scriptures, let us never talk more, that they contain exact rules for the churches of God in all ages.—We might also have argued from the nature of the church, as a free society, which, as such, is subject to none but Christ, her glorious King, as well as the perfection of the scriptures, and of Christ's laws respecting the church over which he is faithful, but we hope that the above arguments may suffice.* From all which it clearly follows, that the modern way of *forcing* ministers on parishes, against their will and choice, is entirely anti-scriptural, anti-christian and Popish. It is a robbing of Christ of his royal prerogative, and his people of a privilege which he has bequeathed to them.—If the generality of professing christians in this land did as much esteem their christian rights and privileges, as

* Such as choose to see the people's divine right to call their own ministers further illustrated, to great purpose, we refer them to *Jus populi divinum;* and to Mr. John Park, minister at Stranrawer, a sufferer for Presbyterian principles; who has a treatise on patronage; and also to the dissertations on patronage, by an anonymous author, who writes the best on that subject of any I ever met with, which book is in the hands of many in this west country.

they do their natural and civil liberties, they would fly from these men of ecclesiastic dominion, as they would do from the standard of the Popish pretender, if there were not men intruding, there would be none intruded; but the bulk are sunk in security, and drenched in indifference, where they must lie, till God, in a way of mercy or judgment, awaken them.

3. See matter of deep lamentation, on a day of solemn, humiliation, that there should be so much self-preaching in our day; som epreaching for applause; others solely for worldly gain, and so making a trade of it; others unweariedly employed in propogating soul-ruining errors without a check; others preaching their own inventions, instead of studying and searching into the holy scriptures, storing their memories therewith, and so coming forth loaded with the precious treasure of the gospel, and that way "bringing out of their treasure things new and old; giving every one a portion in due season;" instead of going this way to work, many are at great pains to read, search into and transcribe, the writings of ancient heathens; as Aristotle, Tully, Seneca, and the great Marcus Aurelius Antonius; and so come forth to the congregation, in which they stand, *toil* and *slave* at the reading, and the poor people are obliged to sit and hear the *heathenish tale*, by one that calls himself the minister, who yet would blush if any said that he preached Christ. If Nehemiah had reason, when he took a view of the desolation of Jerusalem, to say, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" much more reason have we to weep between the porch and the altar, and to mourn before the Lord over the desolations in our Zion, effected by error weekly taught and by immoralities daily practiced.—May we not cry, in the words of the prophet Hosea? "Hear the word of the Lord. ye children of Israel for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing, and lying, and killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood; therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish. (Hosea iv. 1, 2, 3.)

4. As Christ is to be preached in the manner described, then we may see the vast need of a large supply of grace and strength, from Christ, to us that are employed in such an arduous and important work; a work which made an eminent apostle cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And,

"not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think or do any thing as of ourselves." But Christ is kind to his servants, He qualifies them for their work, he sends none a warfare on their own charges. He is present with them in their work, according to his free, absolute and gracious promise, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." He upholds them in, and strengthens them for, their work; an eminent instance, among many others, we have of this, in the case of Paul, which he represents to Timothy; that on a certain occasion he was situated thus: "At my first answer," says he, "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." (2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.) Christ gives them success in their work; says he, "I will clothe her priests with salvation." He hears their own prayers and those of others for them; a striking instance of which we have in the case of Peter, when he was laid in jail and his feet fixed in the stocks. On this affecting occasion a number of praying persons assembled together, and carried Peter's case to the Lord in prayer. The consequence was, that the Lord despatched an angel and set him at liberty. (Acts xii, 5. 17.) Christ also holds them in his hand, "he holds the seven stars in his right hand;" denoting his care of them, love to them, concern about them and respect for them. What a mercy it is so, for the devil holds them in great spite! In all the persecutions that ever were raised against the church of Christ, whether of tongue or hand, the main force of them was always leveled against faithful ministers. Why? Because they are Christ's ensigns who bear the standard, who are always chiefly shot at. It is ministers' work to preach against men's favorite corruptions, which are very dear to them. Wicked men and devils cannot endure this; so when Paul preached against Diana, the whole city was in an uproar. Ministers come in the Lord's name to undermine and destroy the kingdom of darkness; so the old serpent spits venom in their face. But it is enough if their Lord stand by them and strengthen them.

5. Is Christ to be preached in the manner described? then see the need which ministers have of being well acquainted with the cases and conditions of their flocks. Says Paul to the ministers at Ephesus, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock;" that is, to the state and condition of the flock. This seems spoken in allusion to shepherds, whose business it is, not only to tend and watch over, but attentively to observe the cases of the herd, that they may lead them forth to pastures that best suit them. The application here is easy; if

a people are ignorant, they must be instructed; if they are secure and supine, the signs, causes and cures thereof must be set before them; if they are wavering and unstable, efforts must be exerted to have them settled and confirmed. Thus he that winneth souls is wise.

6. Is Christ to be preached in the manner above described? see the necessity which ministers of the gospel are under of being well acquainted with their Bibles. Hereby, like Apollos, they will be mighty in the scriptures; which are able "to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Also the necessity is very great of their having much saving acquaintance with him, and living near him, lest, when "we preach Christ to others, we ourselves should be cast away." It will be sad, if we, by our unbelief, neglect that salvation which we are employed every sabbath in presenting unto, and urging upon, others. It was a dismal affair for those men to perish in the flood, that had an active hand in building the ark.—These ministers can best explain the pangs of the new-birth, and the nature of union to, and communion with Christ, and describe conversion, progressive sanctification, a life of faith, the struggles of the flesh and spirit, and such like subjects, who can speak of them from their own experience.—These are surely best suited to speak a word in season to weary souls, who can comfort them, in their spiritual distresses, "with these consolations wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God." (2 Cor. i. 4.) Whereas, will he be fit to warn his hearers of the devices of Satan, and the deceits of a desperately wicked heart, who is an entire stranger to his own, and knows nothing of the matter but by report? Ministers who are unconcerned about religion, are generally cold and languid in their addresses to the conscience. There is something unnatural in endeavoring to excite in other men's breasts notions which we never felt in our own. But when the faithful gospel minister exhorts others, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

I shall shut up this discourse with a few words, *first* to the ministry here present, and, *then*, to this congregation.

My Reverend Fathers and Brethren—I acknowledge myself very unfit to execute this design, but seeing that I occupy this place by your appointment, I hope that the few following hints will not be unseasonable, which I would choose to take to myself. Let us beware of preaching ourselves, in any shape, such as for applause, our own inventions, our passions or prejudices, or for the sake of worldly gain; but let us imitate the apostles of our Lord, who preached not themselves,

but Christ. A crucified Christ is the only ordinance of heaven for the salvation of souls. Let us by prayer seek all our subjects and furniture on them from the Interpreter, one among a thousand, Him whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor. Let us also be much concerned to wrestle with the Lord, not only for much of his countenance, in our studies and preparations and public services, but great success in his work. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but the increase is of the Lord. Let us beware of being puffed up when eminently countenanced, or over much dejected when we are deserted; for in both pride appears. Let us guard against filling our sermons with dry, airy and frothy speculations, but with the substantial truths and invaluable riches of the gospel. Lastly, let us all, in our judicial meetings and public administrations, study faithfulness. Let us, through the grace that is in Christ for us, study to be faithful to him, to the souls committed to our charge, to the generation which we live and labor among, and to our own souls. We may believe that, what our Lord and Master says to the angel of the church in Smyrna, he says to us, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Finally, A word to you in this congregation.

My Dear Friends and Brethren,—I would exhort you in the words of an apostle, "See that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Very different effects follow on a clear, pure and faithful dispensation of the gospel, in the case of persons in the same congregation. Those that by faith embrace the great salvation presented in the gospel, as sure as God is in heaven, shall come in a little to the full and immediate possession of eternal life; for "he that believeth shall be saved;" but it is equally certain as to those, who, by their unbelief, pride, hardness and impenitency of their hearts reject it, the consequence thereof will be eternal destruction; for "he that believeth not shall be damned." The same star which is to some the morning-star bringing light and day, is to others the evening-star bringing darkness and night; so the same gospel dispensation which is to some the savour of life, is to others the savor of death: the same gospel minister, who is a sweet savor unto God, of Christ in them that are saved, is the same in the case of them that perish. See that you bring forth fruit answerable to the pains that Christ has been at with you; for that end seek much of Christ's presence with you in his ordinances, and a plentiful down-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon you therein. Bless God for your minister, and for what he has done to him, and by his means

for you; give unto God the glory due unto his name. Pray much for your minister, and *for us* that we may be strengthened for our work, supported in it, made successful and faithful to the end. In this exercise you will not miss your own errand. There are two objects which the Lord has much on his heart, Zion and her priests, that is, the church and her ministers, and prayers for them are eminently acceptable to him. I shall conclude the whole in the engaging and affectionate language of Paul to the saints at Rome, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." (Rom. xv. 30.) May God bless his word and to his name be praise. Amen.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. ROBERT ARMSTRONG.

Mr. Armstrong was a native of Scotland. Little more is known of his parentage, than that his mother was a widow, at the time of his coming to America; he was also an only child.

He received a classical education at the University of Edinburgh; and studied Theology at Whitburn with the Rev. Archibald Bruce, Professor at that time under the General Associate Synod. The certificate of his ordination to the ministry, is dated June 15th, 1797. He had been licensed to preach some time in the winter preceding, by the Presbytery of Kelso.

He was one of those students who make their way to professional life, by dint of their own resources; and the ardor and enterprize which it implies, were prominent parts of his character. His parents not possessing much worldly affluence, were unable to assist him. He taught a country school, or acted as private tutor in the families of gentlemen; and by this means he was enabled to make very extensive acquirements, both as a scholar and a divine.

He was licensed, and ordained with a view to his coming to America. An application having been made to the General Associate Synod of Scotland, in the year 1796, by some members who lived near Lexington, Kentucky, for a minister to be sent to them; the Synod in complying with the petition, (in which they asked for but one,) appointed two ministers to go to that country—Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Andrew Fulton. "You might be startled," says a member of Synod, in a letter to a friend in this country, "at the idea of two ministers coming at once; but we thought, as the Synod defrayed all expenses, if any disappointment as to success should follow, *we*,

not *you*, should bear the blame. It was a venture in a noble cause; and kind Providence has crowned it with success."

At the time of Synod's receiving the petition, and making a choice of persons for the mission, Mr. Armstrong had not yet left the ranks of the students, which would imply that they thought him particularly qualified to undertake the appointment.

In an address to the brethren of Kentucky, accompanying the mission, they say, "Had you witnessed, dear brethren, our anxious solicitude to have provided you with able and faithful laborers; had you beheld our entire unanimity; and had you heard the expressions of our unfeigned joy, when the two brethren appointed to go to you, modestly signified their acquiescence in our choice, you would have assuredly gathered, that you are very dear to the church here; and that these two servants of Christ are called by their Master to preach the gospel to you."

The subsequent character and conduct of these two ministers showed, that the discrimination of the Synod had been happily exercised, and their confidence well placed.

At their appointment, they were commissioned by Synod to constitute themselves, on their arrival, into a Court, by the name of the Associate Presbytery of Kentucky. They arrived in the summer of 1798; and after casting the net for a short time in the new waters, in which they were not unsuccessful, on the 28th day of November following they constituted the Court. At this Presbytery Mr. Armstrong received a unanimous call to act as Pastor to the united congregations of Davis's Fork, Miller's Run, and Cane Run; he was installed in the charge, April 23d, 1799, and continued his labors in it, with acceptance and success, until the fall of 1804.

In the year 1804, the members of Mr. Armstrong's three congregations, with very few exceptions, emigrated to the State of Ohio. With respect to this movement, made on account of the prevalence of slavery in Kentucky, if he was not the projector of it, he took an early interest in it. A few years' observance of the horrors of slavery, gave experimental force to an opinion he before admitted in theory, that its influence is entirely unfavorable to religion. The people of his congregation settled together, in Greene County, Ohio, in the confident expectation of his being resettled among them, as soon as it could be done in an orderly manner; they were organized under the name of the United Congregation of Massie's Creek and Sugar Creek; and on the 2d day of September, of the same year, he was ordered by Presbytery

to rejoin his charge. "The Secession Church in Kentucky," says Col. Morrow, in his Letters to his children, "was in small branches and widely scattered, with but little prospect of increase, while wealthy slaveholders possessed large portions of land, and were still adding field to field. Under these circumstances, Seceders, *being grieved from day to day with the unrighteous deeds of oppression*, resolved to look out for a more favorable situation, casting their eyes towards Ohio. A few individuals spied out the land and reported favorably. In 1803 about sixteen or eighteen of us from Mr. Armstrong's congregations with his knowledge and approbation, started for Ohio, and in August arrived at Old Town, on the Little Miami, where we made a station camp in a grove near a fine spring at the edge of a beautiful prairie. Here every thing appeared in its native beauty. Here we spent a Sabbath. From this we explored in small detachments; and on a day appointed met for consultation. The result was, an almost unanimous voice to prosecute the design of *moving* with their minister, and settling a congregation on Sugar and Massie's Creeks. Each prosecuted the design with remarkable success, so that the next spring (1804,) my father-in-law and myself, (with many others) moved over and pitched our tent near a spring, on land recently purchased. In the mean time, preparation was made for laying before Presbytery a statement of our circumstances, with a view to calling a pastor. This was done, a call moderated, sustained and accepted. And in the fall, the Rev. Robert Armstrong was settled as pastor of the united congregations of Massie's Creek and Sugar Creek. Sometimes sermon was in the dwelling-houses (cabins) and sometimes under the shade of a tree, until we got up a round log meeting-house—after a while we got a better house with stoves, and all was comfortable."

Here Mr. Armstrong labored seventeen years, and the *handful of corn in the earth appeared with prosperous fruits.* His charge shortly afterwards was divided, and another minister called to preside over one half of it; from which time his labors were confined to Massie's Creek congregation, until the 9th of January, 1821, when, from causes, not affecting the integrity of himself or congregation, he demitted it, about ten months before his decease.

Shortly before his decease, he went to Black-Rock, in the State of Indiana, with a view to the removal of his family to that place. When he returned, which was on the 27th of September, there seemed to be nothing remarkable in his appearance, but he took sick that night. He looked upon him-

self as dying, but looked forward without fear. To Mr. Adams, a young minister, he said, that on a death-bed review of the doctrines he had taught, he found nothing to fault in them, they were the grounds of his hopes for eternity. For years, he had had no doubt of his interest in the atoning blood of Christ, and his faith did not then fail him. He departed this life on Sabbath morning, the 14th of October, 1821.

Mr. Armstrong was a man of very low stature, but had naturally a strong constitution. During the early part of his ministry, his labors were severe. He had often to dispense the sacrament of the supper three and four times a year without assistance. He had upwards of a hundred miles to go to Presbytery, and between six and seven hundred to Synod; both of which he attended punctually with few exceptions. In compliance with calls to supply vacancies, and organize churches, he had often to go journies of from fifty to two hundred miles; and through a wilderness frequently, which afforded no other comforts of hospitality, than those which his saddle-bags, and the root of a tree afforded.

In the pulpit he had an air of authority, which impressed his audience with feelings of respect; and a look of benevolence and candor, which commanded esteem, and confidence in his judgment. His delivery was slow and deliberate; and his voice was soft, but full, and agreeable to the ear. His talents, though not of the brilliant kind, were above what usually fall to the lot of men. The Rev. Mr. Pringle, of Perth, Scotland, speaking of the two missionaries, in a letter to a friend in this country, says, "Some are perhaps endowed with more splendid talents; but their qualifications are of the solid, permanent and useful kind. Though they do not flash so much at first view, they improve and grow upon acquaintance; and will stand a winter's blast."

He was a firm friend to the principles of the Reformation; and fully approved of the principles of the society to which he belonged, on the subject of separation from corrupt churches.

In private life he was a social, cheerful and instructive companion. In conversation he was particularly fond of anecdotes which contained some useful moral, and of these he had a large fund. In every thing he acted as a father to his people, and frequently reminded them of the example of the primitive christians, in their love for one another. Whatever concerned them, he participated in. It was known to a few, that he was rather partial to the civil institutions of his native land, yet he never intermeddled with politics. When the

news of Gen. Hull's surrender was received, which was on a Sabbath day, in the interval between discourses, he immediately convened the congregation, and after a short admonitory address adapted to the occasion, dismissed them to make preparations for marching the next day, and went part of a day's ride with them.

On the whole, whether we regard his abilities, or his usefulness, the memory of Mr. Armstrong is entitled to high respect. With cheerful submission to the will of God, he accepted of the arduous appointment of Synod. From love to the Lord Jesus, and zeal for the good of souls, he made a willing sacrifice of his ease, his convenience, his attachment to friends and his native soil, to go out on his Master's service to a strange people, a distant land, and comparatively a wilderness. He labored in it upwards of twenty-six years, with industry and faithfulness highly exemplary.

SERMON,

BY THE REV. ROBERT ARMSTRONG,

(Preached at Davies Fork, on the last Sabbath of August, 1800, immediately before the dispensation of the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.)

We have assembled here, this day, with a view to commemorate, or to witness the commemoration of the death of Christ in the sacrament of the supper; that thus, according to the Redeemer's commandment, we may endeavor to preserve the memorial of his dying love: It cannot be either improper or unseasonable for me to direct your attention to the striking and consolatory words now read; they may suggest to our meditation many things well suited to such a solemnity.

The writer of this Epistle establishes the doctrine of justification through the righteousness of Christ without the deeds of the law: He states and answers several objections produced in opposition to this doctrine; and takes occasion to point out the genuine source and indispensable necessity of evangelical holiness as inseparably connected with the state of pardon and acceptance. To engage the Romans to the study of holiness, he presents a variety of motives to enforce his exhortation.

In the beginning of chapter sixth, the apostle mentions an objection which had probably been made to his doctrine as tending to licentiousness. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" This supposed consequence is reprobated in the strongest terms. "God forbid: how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The objection is more particularly considered from verse third to verse twelfth. Then the apostle addresses

an exhortation to the Romans arising from this part of the subject, and continues that exhortation to the end of the chapter. The seventh chapter describes the situation of believers as delivered from the law, as freed from the power of sin and as acting in opposition to it.

The eighth chapter presents various motives for a careful attention to holiness in heart and life. It is introduced with a comprehensive declaration of the believer's happy security as connected with Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." After stating the contrast between the unregenerate sinner and the renewed soul; after expressing his views of the glory and happiness of the saints in the heavenly kingdom as affording an abundant compensation for all the sufferings of the present life; in verse twenty-third, the apostle represents the exercise and expectations of the people of God, as entertaining a well grounded hope of complete deliverance from every evil and of a happy resurrection to eternal felicity.

The thirtieth verse presents to our view the eternal source of every blessing which the saints enjoy, and declares the infallible connection between God's gracious purposes on behalf of his people and their attainment of immortal glory; it comprehends, in four particulars, the astonishing consequences of the love of God to sinners; and describes their salvation in its origin, its commencement, its progress and its final consummation. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here the Apostle contemplating the gracious and wonderful design of Jehovah toward elect sinners, looking backward to the divine determination to save sinners as ancient as eternity past, and forward to the astonishing accomplishment of these gracious purposes through eternity, finds the scene too extensive for the created eye to survey and too magnificent for human language to describe: He beholds, with astonishment and admiration, the magnitude and splendor of the surrounding objects; and by a striking exclamation, declares the impossibility of presenting them to the view of others by an adequate description. "What shall we then say to these things?" Jehovah who determined the salvation of his chosen, is infinitely powerful to repel the assaults of every foe, and infinitely wise to counteract the influence of every opposition to his designs: Therefore the apostle adds another exclamation. "If God be for us who can be against us?"—

Under the wings of such protection it is impossible that any can destroy us.

But the knowledge or consideration of the power and wisdom of God could afford little encouragement to sinners either to expect deliverance from their spiritual enemies or to look for the enjoyment of eternal life, if they had not some reasons to be assured that these perfections were exercised for their advantage. Our text points out the ground of such an assurance in language replete with consolation, and descriptive of the extended hopes which the children of God may entertain. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."—Words which describe the grand effect, and demonstrate the exceeding greatness of that love, which had no beginning, which is immutable and everlasting as God himself; and which will be admired and sung by all the Redeemed through the endless ages of eternal duration. "He spared not his own Son." The most precious gift which God could confer was his own Son. This gift as an incontestable proof of his love to us, he has not withheld: for "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Two things are comprehended in this expression; namely, that resolved on the accomplishment of our redemption, he remitted none of the sufferings due to Christ on account of the sins of men; and that however inestimable the favor he did not withhold it from us; so "he spared not his own Son."

The communication of this gift contains such an evidence of his love as to furnish the greatest security for the enjoyment of all other necessary blessings in due time. "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The words, to which we propose to confine our attention in the following discourse, are these in the first part of the verse—

He spared not his own Son.

In the discussion of this subject I shall

I. Consider the description of the Redeemer's dignity contained in the text. He is the Son of God—"his own Son."

II. Illustrate some propositions comprehended in the expression: "He spared not his own Son"—and

III. Enquire why he did not spare him?

I. Let us consider the description of the Redeemer's dignity. He is the Son of God—"his own Son"

The various names by which the Saviour of sinners is made

known in scripture, and the different designations which are ascribed to him, even when they are descriptive of his official character, likewise imply his divine dignity as the Father's equal. Some of the names given to Messiah have a peculiar reference to his office and work for the salvation of sinners: There are others, which though often introduced in connection with the account of his mediatorial undertaking, do not arise from this source: and though the propriety of their application be demonstrated by his appearance and work as Mediator, yet they are expressive of his original dignity and glory as a divine person capable to undertake and accomplish the redemption of sinners. The designation given him in the text is a remarkable instance of this kind: His right to this designation is fully proved by the accomplishment of our redemption: this right, however, eternally and necessarily belonged to him indep ndently of his mediatorial engagement.

We shall not now attempt a lengthy or elaborate discussion of this important truth: but as it is evidently included in the text, and as the force and spirit of the apostle's expression cannot be perceived without just apprehensions of the nature of the Sonship of Christ, and of his perfections and glory as the Son of God, this interesting doctrine claims some share of our attention on the present occasion.

Jesus Christ in respect to his humanity is often called the Son of Man; a title doubtless derived from his incarnation: But the title Son of God conveys to us an idea far more sublime, and arises from a source extremely different.—Some, who profess an adherence to the gospel, and who acknowledge the divinity of Messiah, consider the title Son of God as derived from the office of Christ, and as a name by which that office is expressed.—To us it appears to have another origin and a very different meaning. We view it as a declaration of the divine glory of the Redeemer and as an expression of that relation which from eternity subsisted between him and the Father; a relation by which two of the divine persons are distinguished in Scripture; Paternity is ascribed to the first, Sonship to the second; a relation which did not commence with the incarnation of Christ, and which is ascribed to him in a sense entirely distinct from his official character.—Jesus is designated "the Son of God," "his own" or "his proper Son;" but though this relation is certainly revealed to us by a term the most proper, and more accommodated to our capacity than any other, any attempt to illustrate or explain it by a partial comparison with the nature of sonship among men, must proceed only from folly or impiety. It is a mystery

which we are called to believe; a mystery pregnant with consolation, and is an exhibition of the glory of Christ, influential on the hearts and lives of them that believe, but which we shall never be able to comprehend.

Jesus Christ was the Son of God from eternity: The title Son of God applied to him is expressive of the infinite dignity of his person and of his ability for discharging the office of Messiah. The idea of an economical sonship, or the supposition that the glorious titles Son of God, God's own proper Son, his only begotton Son, so often ascribed to the Redeemer in the sacred oracles have their foundation in his office, destroys the force of the apostle's nervous reasoning in this and many other passages of Scripture.

In opposition to the idea of a Sonship merely *Official* and in support of Christ's relation to God as a Son from *Eternity* the following observations merit attention.

1. The Sonship of Christ is of such a kind as cannot particularly correspond with that of any creature: All men are sons of God by creation. "Have we not all one *Father?* Hath not one God *created* us?" Believers are sons by adoption. The Holy angels too are sons of God because they received their being from him and bear his image. In the Book of God, however, the ministerial character, or the performance of the duty of servants whether by angels or men, is never represented as the foundation of a proper sonship.* Such a relation derives its origin neither from an appointment to any office, nor from the performance of the duties belonging to that office.

Messiah is not denominated the Son of God on account of his incarnation, his mediatory office, his resurrection, or his exaltation to the Father's right hand: some of these demonstrated the reality of the Sonship of Jesus, and displayed the divine glory which belonged essentially to him as the Son, the only begotton Son of God; the others were reasons why he should be revealed to men in this character and occasions on which his Sonship was expressly declared; but neither one nor all of them must be regarded as the ground of this glo-

* Magistrates are indeed called "the *children* of the Most High," on account of the office with which they are invested (Ps. lxxxii. 6.) "I have said ye are gods; and all of you are *children* of the Most High"—But the sonship here ascribed to them is figurative or metaphorical, since it is evident that they are called *children* of the Most High, and gods in the same sense and for the same reason. The last appellation is plainly figurative; and no good reason can be assigned why the first may not be viewed in the same light. See a most excellent sermon on the Sonship of Christ by Dr. Guyse, where several things briefly mentioned in this head of discourse are more fully illustrated by that Author with his usual judgment and accuracy.

rious relation to the Father. The Jews understood his claiming this peculiar relation to be descriptive of divine glory and denoting the possession of infinite perfections as equal with God, when he called God his Father; hence they accused him of blasphemy because he, whom they supposed to be nothing more than a man, thus made himself God. (John v. 17. 18.) "But Jesus answered them, my Father worketh hitherto and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the Sabbath but said also, that God was his Father, [his own Father,] making himself equal with God."—He does not deny their conclusion but proceeds to establish more fully the propriety of his assertion; and in several verses immediately following, shews that, though he acted by the Father's appointment and according to the commission received from him, he really possessed divine perfections and had an unquestionable claim to divine honors as the Son of God.

2. The love of God is said to be made manifest by giving and sending his Son for our salvation. (John iii. 16,) "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him might not perish." (1 John v. 9,) "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might have life through him." Here Messiah is described as the Son of God before he was sent into the world, and the Father's love is exhibited not merely from the consideration of his appointing a Mediator; it is set forth by a description of the dignity of him who was appointed to that office. Therefore he is said to stand in a peculiar relation to God as his Son. God's giving and sending his Son are expressions comprehending his original appointment of a Mediator for the redemption of sinners, the astonishing discovery of this appointment in the appearance of Christ among men, and the whole of the Father's procedure towards him in the time of his humiliation; now it is plain, from the words already quoted, that the dignity of Sonship was prior to all these, and could not have its foundation in any of them; but the love was displayed in thus giving and sending him who before possessed the dignity and enjoyed the love which belonged to "*his own*," "*his only begotten Son*."

3. The scriptures evidently speak of the Sonship and offices of Christ as distinct in their nature and expressive of different relations. In the third chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the excellency of Christ is proved from the account of his dignity as the Son of God;—a comparison is stated between

Moses and Jesus: both are represented as faithful in the performance of their work; but the former was nothing more than a *servant*, while the latter possessed the dignity of a *Son*, by whom the church was created and to whom it belongs as his property; "and Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a *servant*, but Christ as a *Son* over *his own house*." Herein consists the infinite superiority of Christ above Moses; the one was only a servant, the other was entitled to a higher character than that of a servant, he is the Son of God. In this contrast between the type and the anti-type, the Sonship of Christ and his office are presented to view as different things. Jesus as Mediator is the Father's servant. "Behold my servant whom I uphold." If the designation Son of God embraced nothing more than the official character of Messiah, in which he acted the part of a servant, the titles Son and servant, cannot with any propriety be contrasted or opposed. A son and a servant are different relations, and cannot be founded on the same thing: he who is a son may be also a servant; but he cannot be a son and a servant in the same sense and for the very same reason. If Jesus as Mediator, be the Father's servant, he cannot in the same sense and for the same reason be also his Son.

The same distinction is stated in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter ix. 20, where we are told that Paul preached *Christ* in the Synagogue, "That he is the *Son of God*." In the days of the apostles, the term Christ was not used as a proper name; but as expressive of the office exercised by the Redeemer for the salvation of men. When we are informed that the apostle preached Christ or Messiah that he is the Son of God, nothing can be more evident than that the names Christ or Messiah and Son of God, do not here signify one and the same thing; for we cannot suppose that the apostle employed himself in teaching that Christ was Christ or labored to establish an identical proposition; such a supposition, however, must be made, if the distinction for which we contend is not admitted. Shall we then affirm that the acute discernment of this illustrious character, to say nothing of the wisdom of inspiration, suffered him to reason in such a manner? No, it is impossible. The substance of his preaching on this occasion was, that Jesus the promised Messiah already risen from the dead, is the Son of God, and as such, a divine person. Jesus was accused of blasphemy, not on account of his claiming the character of Messiah, but because he called himself the Son of God, in a sense descriptive of his divinity.

On the whole then, it appears that when Christ is called the

Son of God, his own Son, the designation is expressive of a dignity not conferred upon him, but essentially belonging to him. The office of Messiah arose from the Father's will; but he was necessarily a Son from eternity. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; when there were no depths, before the mountains were settled, before the hills were brought forth, then was I by him as one brought up with him." I now go on

II. To illustrate some propositions comprehended in the expression "He spared not his own Son." It implies

1. That no part of the demands of the law, or of the claims of justice, was remitted to Christ.

The obedience and sufferings of Messiah are inseparably connected as constituting that perfect righteousness by which sinners are justified. In his obedience, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness, delighted to do the Father's will and to obey his commandments: he did always those things that pleased the Father. Being perfectly holy in his nature; being God as well as man, it was impossible for him to fail in any thing that belonged to his work as a requisition of God's holy law. The obedience of Christ implied a state of suffering; and his suffering so far as it was voluntary, was an act of obedience; for Jesus obeyed in all his sufferings, and suffered in all his obedience. Yet in speaking of the work of Christ, for the greater distinctness, it is not improper to consider them apart. The words of our text have a peculiar reference to the sufferings of Christ, when it is said of the Father that he "spared not his own Son."

Whatever punishment is threatened in the law of God against sinners, it was inflicted upon Christ in the character of their surety. 'Tis true, there are several things to which sinners are subjected in consequence of their apostacy, that could have no place with regard to the Son of God: But these things, though necessarily arising from our rebellion against God, and from the finite nature and capacity of the transgressors of his law, formed no part of what is essentially necessary to answer the demands of divine justice, or to satisfy the claims of God's holy law. For example, the state of spiritual death, as it consists in moral impurity and opposition to God, prevails in every unbeliever as one of the first effects of the curse; but spiritual death in this sense could not be applicable to Christ; for it was absolutely necessary that Messiah should be "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" otherwise he would have been a transgressor of that law, which he behooved to fulfill, and could never have

effected the salvation of sinners, either by his obedience or sufferings.

Again, every impenitent sinner will be subjected to eternal death. However little gospel-hearers may regard the declaration, however much they may be disposed to forget or despise it, eternal death is threatened in the law as the inevitable portion of all who continue to misimprove their day of grace, and who finally reject the gracious offers of mercy which are made to sinners in the word of God, or by the preaching of the Gospel: yet the execution of this threatening, though the natural and necessary effect of the curse in regard to all who continue indifferent about the improvement of the means of salvation, does not arise, merely from the nature of sin, or from any thing which essentially belongs to the curse of the law; but from the finite nature and capacity, and the condition of sinners. They, who obstinately persist in refusing "to hear him that speaketh to them from heaven," and in rejecting the only remedy which God has provided for sinners, can never satisfy divine justice, so as to obtain an acquittal, by their sufferings: and as they will be eternally sinning, so they must eternally suffer without a hope to obtain any alleviation of their woe. They have merited, and they must endure the unhappy lot of being punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

But had an eternity of suffering necessarily belonged to that answer to its demands, which the law of God requires, the redemption of sinners by a surety had been absolutely impossible; for it could not have been accomplished by any vicarious satisfaction. It was neither necessary nor possible, that the Son of God should eternally suffer; nor was it practicable for us to obtain deliverance by sufferings of such a duration. Yet God remitted nothing from the just requisitions of the law to our surety, because he was his Son. The sufferings of our Redeemer, though comparatively of short duration, were of such value on account of their extent, and the dignity of the sufferer, that they afforded an adequate ransom for the redemption of sinners. The brook in the way of our admission into the favor of God, was exhausted, and the cup of wrath put into the hand of Jesus, he drank to the bottom. Therefore he said, The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it? The same justice which rendered the appearance of Christ necessary for our salvation, prevented any remission of that debt which he as-

sumed as our surety; and he discharged it to the full, for "God spared not his own Son."

2. The Father himself inflicted the punishment, required in the law, upon Christ. *He* spared not his own Son.

Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered from men and devils, as well as from the immediate hand of God. Considering the nature and design of his work, it might have been expected that both men and devils would contend against him. By the influence of Satan, the human race had first been ruined: this enemy, in conjunction with the world, had long pursued the same schemes of hostility and destruction. His designs were not to be defeated, his power destroyed, or his empire overthrown, but by the Redeemer, who, even in his sufferings, triumphed over him, and by death, overcame him that had the power of death. The world, too, must be overcome to secure a victory for the followers of the Lamb. And as our Redeemer behooved to die a violent death, it appears most proper and fit that such a death should be inflicted by the hands of *men*. Yet whatever might be the malice of Satan, or the wickedness of the world in their opposition to Christ, his sufferings, which proceeded from both, had their origin in the Father's determination; for, in consequence of the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, he was delivered into the hands of sinners to be crucified and slain. Much as our Redeemer suffered from men and devils, through the divine permission and appointment, his most exquisite sufferings proceeded immediately from the hand of God the Father, who had entered into covenant with him, in behalf of sinners:—as the Judge of all, he demanded from him the payment of that debt which he had taken upon himself as our surety. In the discharge of this debt, while he made satisfaction for the transgressors, he felt the effects of God's displeasure on the account of the sins of men. His Father, in the execution of divine justice, notwithstanding his love to Christ, his only begotten Son, actually treated him as a great offender. He deserted him, he hid his face from him and subjected him to his wrath. All these caused him to exclaim in bitter agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The execution of divine vengeance upon him by the immediate hand of God, had been long the subject of prophecy: it is described in lively colors by Isaiah, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and

with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief." (Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6, 10.) The words of our text evidently show us the hand of God the Father, as the cause of the Messiah's sufferings. "He spared not his own Son." He not only left him to the temptations and assaults of Satan; but he removed not one ingredient from the cup of wrath due to the Redeemer, as bearing the "iniquities of us all." We therefore observe,

3. That the sufferings of Christ were *vicarious*, or in other words, endured by him in the room and place of sinners. So much is plainly implied in the words of our text, considered in connection with those which immediately follow, "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and therefore had no sin of his own on account of which he deserved to suffer. He did not suffer to confirm the truth of his doctrine, as some have asserted. The sufferings of Christ unto death, or such sufferings endured by any other teacher, might be regarded as strong moral evidence that he believed the doctrines taught by him in the course of his ministrations; but these sufferings could afford no convincing evidence of the truth of the doctrines themselves. The producing of such conviction in the minds of others, could not be the end of our Redeemer's sufferings; they could not have a proper tendency to accomplish such a design.

Neither did he suffer merely to leave an example to his followers. 'Tis true, indeed, that we have an illustrious example set before us in consequence of the sufferings of Christ. We are informed by the apostle Peter that "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example;" yet neither was this the principal reason why God spared not his own Son: For, had this been the great end of the sufferings of the Son of God, they could be profitable only to those who died after his suffering work was finished. A good example can be advantageous to those only, who, having an opportunity to observe it, may avail themselves of the instruction and encouragement which it affords. It would be of no service to any who never knew it, or who left the stage of time before the appearance of such an instructor. Thus the sufferings of Christ, as an example, however profitable to us who live under the New Testament dispensation, were, in this view of no avail to the Old Testament saints, who died before the appearance and sufferings of the Son of God; yet these saints looked

forward to the Messiah as their Saviour ; and in the exercise of faith, regarded him in his sufferings as a source of consolation, and the ground of their hopes for time and eternity. It appears, therefore, that Jesus suffered for some other reason than to set an example to his followers. His sufferings were vicarious. They were a satisfaction and atonement for sin, being endured in the room of sinners. He was "delivered up for us all." Did your time allow, a variety of considerations might be suggested, and many passages of scripture adduced in support of this truth. At present, I shall take notice of the following things, briefly, to confirm and illustrate the important and consolatory doctrine of the atonement, as it has been already stated.

This truth is plainly implied in the account which the scriptures give of Messiah's sacerdotal office. He is expressly called a priest: his work, as to its nature and design, was typified and illustrated by the work of the priests under the law. They offered sacrifices; and their sacrifices, though in a typical sense, made atonement for sin, and procured the remission of temporal punishment. Jesus, the substance of these shadows, "made his soul an offering for sin :"—for sin, not his own, but inherent in, or committed by us. As a priest he offered the sacrifice of himself, and by one offering, forever perfected them that are sanctified. Consider the resemblance, the striking resemblance, between the first and the second Adam, or between the first man and Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners. This resemblance is stated by the apostle Paul, for the illustration of that very truth concerning which I now speak. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.) Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation : even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life—so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." (Rom. v. 18, 19.) When these passages are viewed in their connection with each other, it appears that the *first* Adam represented all his natural offspring in the first covenant, so that his sin was imputed to them for their condemnation ; and that our Lord Jesus Christ, the *second* man, or the second Adam, in the covenant of grace represented all his spiritual seed, that they might be justified through the imputation of his righteousness ; or in other words, he obeyed and suffered in the place of sinners.

Jesus is said to have suffered for sin and for sinners. "He

(i. e. Christ) hath suffered for us." (1 Pet. ii. 21.) "For Christ also hath suffered for sins." (ch. iii. 18.) It cannot with any propriety be alleged in explication of these passages now quoted, that Messiah suffered to confirm the truth of his doctrine, or principally to leave us an example. Let it be observed, that he is said to have suffered for us or in our stead; such is the signification of the word here translated *for*. If he suffered and died only to confirm his doctrine or to leave a proper example, it could not with any propriety be said that he suffered *for* us; else the same thing might be affirmed of those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus; but the scriptures afford us no example of this form of speech concerning them. In short, it is said of Christ that he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom *for* many. The original word here rendered *for*, doubtless denotes substitution. Christ's suffering for us, therefore, signifies his suffering in our place, making atonement or giving a ransom for sin.

4. The words of our text imply that the sufferings of Christ were inconceivably great. Their inconceivable extent will appear if we consider the design of these sufferings, to make atonement for sin, if we contemplate the express declarations of scripture concerning them, or if we attend to the language and situation of Messiah during the time of his sufferings. The sufferings of Jesus, as we have seen in the illustration of the last proposition, were of a propitiatory nature. The sins of all who have already entered into eternal rest, and of all who shall hereafter be brought to glory, were imputed to, and laid upon him, forming an accumulated load of guilt which none but the Son of God could expiate, and which demanded a punishment proportionably great. The express declarations of scripture, intimate the vast extent of the Redeemer's sufferings. "Who knows the power of God's wrath?" Yet it was endured to the utmost by his own Son; endured, may we not say, in a measure infinitely greater than that which through eternity can fall to the lot of any impenitent sinner? "God spared not his own Son." The sword of justice was lifted up against him, and it pierced him without the exercise of mercy. "Awake, O sword," says God by the prophet, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow."

The nature, as well as the vast and inconceivable extent of the sufferings of Christ, may be learned by the account given by the Evangelist, of his language and situation when he suffered for us.

In the garden when he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," the sweat fell from him, as great drops of blood, down to the ground. Did the prospect of his sufferings and death by the hands of men, or, did the thought of the condition to which his disciples would be exposed in the time of his sufferings, and in the period which should intervene between that and his resurrection, produce the agony he felt, or occasion the language he uttered in the garden? No. It is impossible. The supposition is every way injurious to the character of Christ. His words and his agony could not arise from the latter: he felt, indeed, and he expressed a generous sympathy for his followers in this trying period; but he knew the consequences of his death both with regard to himself and them. He knew and he believed the promises of God, respecting his glorious reward and the advancement of his kingdom. This was calculated to afford encouragement and consolation, rather than produce the effect described by the Evangelist. His words, and his agony in the garden, could not proceed from the former; they could not be occasioned by the prospect of his death, or sufferings to be endured from the hands of men. Can we suppose that Jesus was less patient or possessed of less fortitude than many of his followers? In the prospect of calumny, of reproaches, of contempt, of enduring the most inhuman cruelty, and, even when actually suffering all these, they have often felt and expressed a holy joy: they have occasioned songs of gratitude and praise in the experience of their friends, and astonished their enemies by their patience, their resignation and their fortitude. Have the sons of men shown such resolution under the cross of Christ, have they felt and spoken and acted in this manner; and shall we say that the Son of God was so greatly dismayed by the view of sufferings, only of the same kind with theirs! He who reads the divine character of Jesus, and beholds his precious example with admiration, in the word of God, will be shocked at the idea, and be astonished that any calling themselves by the name of Christ, should so greatly dishonor his illustrious character, as to cherish and maintain it. Whence then arises the remarkable difference? From the nature and extent of the sufferings endured by our Redeemer. He was deserted by God and subjected to his wrath. This was the cause of his bloody sweat, and from this proceeded that heart-melting agony which distracted his soul. In these the Father spared not his own Son. Deserted by God! Wonderful event! Astonishing dispensation, that he who was always the Father's delight, his beloved Son,

should be deserted by him! Yet not more wonderful than true. The Saviour, in the extremity of his sufferings, and in the bitterness of his agony, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was not, indeed, deserted in the same manner the wicked are in the place of punishment. He still continued the object of his Father's love, though forsaken in respect of the manifestation of that love. The desertion from which the Son of God suffered so much, did not deprive him of the divine support. Jesus expressed his dependence upon this in the view of his sufferings when he said, "I am not alone, but the Father is with me." He expected the accomplishment of the divine declaration, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold." Therefore in the midst of his afflictions, he still expresses his interest in God as his God, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet this desertion was a source of grievous affliction to the Son of God; it never had and never can have a parallel; it formed a part of that satisfaction for the sins of men, which had so justly deprived them of the enjoyment of God; it was a sufficient equivalent for that punishment of loss in hell, which all the redeemed would otherwise have felt through eternity. Messiah was subject to the wrath of God. His sufferings from men and devils were great, but his bloody sweat and cry of agony, proceeded from the sufferings of his soul in a state of desertion, and under the sense of the wrath of an offended God. His sorrows were not alleviated by any communications of sensible comfort. Every ingredient in the cup of wrath due to the redeemed, was contained in that of Christ, and exhausted by him while he suffered for us; for the Judge of all spared not his own Son. All God's waves and billows passed over him. These corresponded to that spiritual death to which all mankind are naturally subjected, and to that eternal death to which every sinner would have otherwise been exposed.

III. Let us inquire why God did not spare his own Son.

After what has been already said, it is not necessary to enlarge on this part of the subject. Several things have already presented themselves to our view in the former part of the discourse, which might have been here introduced with propriety.

Every consequence resulting from this remarkable dispensation, may, in one view or another, be regarded a reason, in the divine mind, for the suffering work of Christ. All these things were from eternity fully known to *him*, by whom the redemption of sinners was devised. They are so many parts

of the same wonderful plan; and therefore, they may be considered as so many reasons why he did not spare his own Son. The circumscribed limits of a single discourse do not permit me to mention *all* the reasons for the sufferings of Christ, which a minute enquiry into the plan of salvation might suggest; and there are doubtless many others which our imperfect understanding cannot perceive.

Though divine justice required a sufficient satisfaction or ransom, that sinners might be pardoned and accepted, yet there was no *absolute* necessity for the sufferings of the Son of God. The supreme disposer of all things might have suffered the sons of men to perish in their sins, as he has left the angels who kept not their first estate, to suffer eternally that punishment which their rebellion merited; his acting otherwise towards sinners of the human race, was wholly the effect of his sovereign pleasure, in the exercise of which he has "mercy upon whom he will have mercy."

The following things claim our notice as so many reasons why our Redeemer suffered, and suffered in such a measure.

I. God spared not his own Son, because his sufferings were determined in the divine purpose and, with the Redeemer's consent, stipulated in the covenant of grace. Every dispensation which the world has witnessed was the result of God's decree and determinately fixed in his purpose and counsel, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. His counsel stands and he doth all his pleasure. Every part of the sufferings of Christ was unalterably marked out in the purpose of God: This purpose behooved to fail, if any thing comprehended in Messiah's cup of sufferings had been taken away. The irrevocable establishment of these sufferings in the purpose of Heaven is declared by the Apostle Peter, when he says to his hearers concerning Christ, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts ii. 23.) Yet it was necessary that this divine purpose should be accomplished with the consent of the illustrious sufferer. His consent was obtained by covenant. The Psalmist introduces Jehovah as speaking of this transaction thus, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant," (Ps. lxxxix. 3,)—Words which, though they might have an immediate reference to God's covenant of royalty with David, are ultimately and in their most extensive meaning to be applied to that covenant in which the salvation of sinners was connected, and of

which the other was a figure:—Here the mediator between God and man undertakes the work of our redemption, *here* his sufferings and his reward were set before him, and *here* the promises were made to him and to us in him. The accomplishment of these promises was suspended upon the performance of the condition by Christ. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." (Isa. liii. 10.) The condition just and necessary in itself, must be completely fulfilled, otherwise the second Adam had failed as well as the first; and the redemption of the soul had ceased forever. Equitable as were the terms of the covenant, an exact compliance with them, on the part of Christ, was demanded by the Father as a judge, that the promises of the same covenant might flow to us: and therefore "he spared not his own Son."

2. The prophetic declarations concerning Christ as suffering for us, must have their accomplishment. In a variety of passages the suffering work of Jesus is prophetically described and sometimes, in terms that mark out these sufferings as if they had been actually endured. "It pleased the Father," said the Prophet Isaiah concerning Christ, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief."

Among other evidences by which the truth of Messiah's mission is established, that of prophecy holds a considerable place. The things concerning the Saviour were foretold, not merely to instruct the old Testament saints respecting the way of salvation through him, or to encourage them with the prospect of his appearance; but also to point him out as the true Messiah to others living under the New Testament dispensation, when they should see all things written concerning him fully verified. Such an exact fulfillment became necessary, that the faith of believers might be confirmed and established, and that unbelievers might be left without excuse. Such a fulfillment of the Scripture declarations and prophecies concerning Christ is asserted by the Apostle John, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." (John 19. 28.)

3. God spared not his own Son, because the requisitions of his law and justice must be answered. The law of God contains an image of the divine perfections: it threatens sinners with death on account of their transgressions. Human laws are imperfect: they cannot embrace every case, nor correspond to all cases which may occur: hence the power of re-

mitting the legal punishment, has been frequently, and not without reason put into the hands of public rulers: But the law of God is perfect; the Lawgiver is possessed of infinite wisdom; every crime is seen in its true colors; the innocent cannot be condemned, and as to the guilty, there can be no mistake. The sentence is just; and the vindication of the equity of the divine government, requires that it be duly executed in the punishment of sin. Such a punishment either on the person of the sinner or his surety depends not on the will, but the nature of God. Vindicatory justice is essential to his nature, it demands a satisfaction ere the transgressor can go free. For this reason the sword of justice was unsheathed against the Son of God, that its deadly stroke might be averted from sinners: This, then, was one great reason why God spared not his own Son.

To support their denial of the propitiatory nature of our Redeemer's sufferings, some have assigned reasons for the sufferings of Christ unworthy of the wisdom of God, as well as inconsistent with the declarations of the Scriptures concerning them and referred them to an end, which could not be obtained by such means. It is true there are some things which arise as consequences from the sufferings of Christ, which cannot properly be regarded as principal ends of his sufferings, nor viewed as the great, the principal reasons why God spared not his own Son. Jesus suffered to make atonement for sin, that a proper answer mght be given unto the demands of the law and justice of God. He was delivered up for all, who have been or shall be saved: Hence the apostle says of God the Father, that he spared not his own Son: but delivered him up for us all.

4. The saviour of sinners suffered that the glory of the divine perfections might be displayed. The sufferings of Jesus afford a glorious manifestation, particularly, of the justice, the wisdom, the mercy and love of God. All these shone forth conspicuously in the plan of redemption.

Divine justice would have been glorified in the punishment of every sinner of Adam's family; but it appears with far greater lustre in the sufferings of God's own Son. Here we have God's detestation of sin, and the necessity of a satisfaction to divine justice most clearly set before us, (Rom. iii. 25. 26,) "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare I say at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Again, the *wisdom* of God is eminently manifested in the device of redemption through the sufferings of Christ. The divine wisdom appears in the works of creation and in the dispensations of common providence, but it shines with greater glory in the salvation of sinners through the interposition of a Mediator. By this means the wisdom of God made good to arise out of evil; made the sins of men an occasion of greater glory to God and of greater happiness to the redeemed: It united the most jarring interests and reconciled the most obstinate transgressors, in such a way as neither men nor angels could have devised or imagined. For these reasons probably, as well as on other accounts, is Christ denominated the Wisdom of God. In the consideration of these things we may exclaim with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Farther, the sufferings of Christ afford the greatest evidence of the mercy, and the most delightful manifestation of the love of God. Mercy would have eternally continued to be an essential perfection of God, although none of his creatures had been left to bring themselves into a state of misery; but upon this supposition, there would be no occasion for the exercise of mercy. Mercy would still have belonged to the divine character, although it had never been extended to any sinners of mankind by the accomplishment of their salvation, yet in this case the glory of his mercy had not in such a degree been displayed: the sons of men might then indeed have seen and felt his justice in the execution of his wrath, but they had been eternally deprived of any occasion to sing of God's mercy. Without the sufferings of Christ, the whole race of Adam had eternally continued in that state of misery, which is the natural consequence of sin. To proclaim the glory of divine mercy, this plan of deliverance was devised and accomplished: hence the words of the apostle to the Romans, "That he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, whom he had afore prepared unto glory."

The same plan affords a pleasing manifestation of the love of God. The love of God has been displayed to the holy angels, by their establishment in the possession of that glory and felicity which belong to their exalted station, as the ministering servants of the most High. It was displayed by the bestowment of many invaluable blessings upon man at his creation and by the continuance of these blessings so long as

he remained in a state of innocency and integrity. But such discoveries of the love of God fall far short of those manifestations of his love to sinners of mankind by the work of Christ. These we have reason to believe, have no parallel in any other of God's dispensations towards his creatures. Hence the Apostle John exclaims, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only qegotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 9. 10.)—Once more:

5. Jesus suffered that sinners might be saved. The glory of God was the ultimate end of his purpose and counsel respecting all his creatures. The manifestation of it, was the last end of the work of Christ. Into this must every dispensation of justice or mercy be resolved. Therefore Messiah addresses the Father thus, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." But the glory of God, according to the device of infinite wisdom, was to be manifested by means of the salvation of sinners, chosen to eternal life through the work of the Redeemer. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (1 Cor. v. 21.) "He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) The same apostle says, concerning the design of his work and its happy effect, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) For this end did the Son of God become man; for this end did he obey and suffer and die. That sinners of mankind might become the sons of God, he became the Son of man; and that such as you might be delivered from death, he suffered unto death. God did not spare him, that he might spare such as you, and bring you to enjoy all the blessings of his special favor, even a complete and an eternal salvation. For he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things? A proper attention to this subject will show us—

1. The inflexible severity of divine justice demanding an adequate punishment, either from the sinner or from his surety. The most demonstrative proof of this, is given in the sufferings of Christ. All other declarations of it fall infinitely short of such an evidence. He spared not his own Son,

Though the Saviour was the Father's beloved Son, nothing due to the desert of our sins, was on this occasion removed from him. The truth, the faithfulness, and the justice of God were fully displayed; but divine mercy had no place here, except as extended to those for whom our Redeemer endured the stroke of justice. His request that the cup of wrath might pass from him, was denied. And if he cried out thus under his sufferings, how deplorable is your condition, sinner, should you, in consequence of continuing under the power of unbelief, be eternally subjected to the execution of divine wrath?

2. The great evil of sin, for which no atonement was sufficient, but the blood of the Son of God. In the sufferings of Christ, we may see not only the inflexible severity of divine justice, but the great evil and the abominable nature of sin clearly exhibited. Here its power to condemn and punish, is most surely ascertained. "Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate," are the words of God concerning sin. Had it not been so greatly contrary to his nature and law, as to require such an atonement, that it might be pardoned and that transgressors might be delivered from the guilt of sin, it had never been *thus* punished in God's own Son. Yet, unbelievers, however bitter sin be in itself, and however grievous in its consequences, it is the object of your delight; you drink up iniquity like water, though a poison so dangerous that the least drop is fatal; productive of death, and succeeded by misery inexpressible and without end.

What do you propose to yourself, unbelieving sinner, by doing that which God hates? The indulgence of caprice? or the acquisition of transitory and delusive enjoyments? Could you think of receiving a serpent into your bosom, on account of its apparent beauty, when you have reason to be convinced that its noxious bite would soon bring you to the dust? Though iniquity is rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue, the bitterness of death is sooner or later found to be the inseparable consequence of sin; yet the discovery, on account of his blinded obstinacy, is made too late by the impenitent sinner. If God spared not his own Son, who assumed the likeness of sinful flesh, and became sin for such as you only by imputation, if divine justice rose in such a manner against him, shall God spare sinners who continue to act the part of his enemies, and remain infected with universal depravity?

3. The impossibility of obtaining salvation by the works of the law. We are informed, that by these, no flesh can be

justified. Was the appearance of the Son of God in the end of the world, were his obedience and death necessary to procure the pardon of sin? and shall the sinner, weak and ruined as he is, accomplish his own salvation? Is sin an infinite evil? and shall a finite, an imperfect and sinful creature make atonement for it? yet many hearers of the gospel, though in words ready to acknowledge the vanity and the danger of such an attempt, after all, seek salvation by the works of the law; perhaps without knowing that they do so. When duties are attended to with regularity, and with some appearance of concern or affection, all is well: they are full of confidence. But what is the ground of this confidence? It is their performance of duties, their concern about religion, and not Christ alone.

When the consciences of men are duly affected with the sense of sin, and when they are listened to with any degree of impartial attention, they will produce a conviction of guilt and a fear of avenging justice, which exclude all confident reliance upon any thing the sinner has done or can do to effect his own salvation. Hence arise anxious inquiries concerning the means by which he may be reconciled to God, and obtain his favor. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah vi. 6, 7.)

An answer to such inquiries, calculated to dispel our fears of divine wrath, and pregnant with everlasting consolation and good hope, God has graciously given us in the gospel. "For the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is to bring Christ down from above: or who shall descend into the deep? that is to bring Christ up again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 6—9.) Whatever is removed from us as high as heaven, or lies concealed in the bottom of the deep, is placed beyond our reach, and may be justly considered as an acquisition which it is impossible for us to attain. Thus the words of the apostle just now quoted, are applicable to the state of a conscience

distressed by convictions of sin, without knowing how to escape the curse of the law. They are descriptive of God's gracious interposition, in providing and plainly declaring the only effectual way of reconciliation. It is as impossible for you to obtain salvation by the works of the law, as to bring any object down from heaven or to raise it up from the bottom of the deep: but for your encouragement we tell you, that your salvation does not depend upon the use of such ineffectual means; for this salvation is brought near to you, as often as you hear the word of faith preached.

4. That there is a sufficient warrant for inviting all who hear the gospel to apply the blood of Christ for pardon and acceptance. Was the Redeemer's satisfaction to divine justice the atonement appointed by God? Was his fulfilling all righteousness of infinite value, as the work of a divine person? Was the work of Messiah performed in our nature? Have we not then abundant ground to invite and beseech all who hear the gospel, in the exercise of faith to depend upon it for salvation? However guilty or polluted you may be, this remedy, which God has provided, is abundantly efficacious to procure your deliverance from the guilt and from the defilement of sin. Let not fatal delays, slothful security, or pernicious inquiries respecting your right to improve the exhibition of divine grace, influence you to neglect an application of the offer of mercy which God is making to you in the word of the gospel. Are you guilty, and condemned by the curse of the law? The atonement made by Christ. is equal to every demand of divine justice against the greatest sinners. Are you conscious of your total inability to comply with the offer made in the gospel? Here, too, you have the highest security to depend upon: Jesus has purchased, and he continues to bestow grace for this purpose. The man with the withered hand, had as little power to stretch it out, at the command of Christ, as you naturally to believe in him for salvation; nevertheless, obedient to the divine call, he made the attempt with success, and was healed. In the use of the appointed means, you have the same encouragement to depend upon the power of God for your deliverance. For as sure as he ordered the man, to whose case we allude, to stretch out his withered hand, so sure is he now, in effect, requiring you to apply his righteousness and receive his grace for your salvation.

Do you, on account of the unworthiness of your character, still doubt of your right to come to Christ? Such a doubt has no proper foundation. For however unprepared, however

unworthy, however much estranged from God, there are no insurmountable bars in your way; you are yet welcome by the call of God, to the participation of all that is contained in the New Covenant. Hear the invitation which God addresses to sinners: "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man." "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

5. That all the redeemed are laid under peculiar obligations to love and to serve God. All mankind owe him obedience, and deserve his wrath on account of their disobedience. The obligations are exceedingly strengthened, by the remarkable testimony of his love which God has given, when he did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for them. Yet though not justified by the deeds of the law; though their obedience and services are not regarded as in any degree the ground of their acceptance with God; they are not in reality, nor do they consider themselves as on that account released from an obligation to obey the law as a rule of life. No; they were chosen and called by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. O believers! are you not deeply indebted to Him, who vouchsafed to look upon you with an eye of gracious compassion in your low and lost estate? Ought you not to love Him who first loved you, and at so great an expense as the sufferings of his own Son, accomplished your redemption? He stood in no need of any of your services, and he might have glorified himself in your everlasting destruction. He has testified his love to you and displayed the exceeding riches of his grace, by effecting your deliverance from that misery in which you were involved. And does not his love, manifested in such a manner, by saving you who had combined with his enemies to oppose and dishonor him, claim your admiration, gratitude and obedience? Herein is love, not that you loved God, but that he loved you and sent his Son to be the propitiation for your sins.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. ANDREW FULTON.

The Rev. Andrew Fulton was a native of Scotland; but of what particular part, the writer of this sketch has not been informed. The following particulars of Mr. Fulton's history, may, however, be relied upon as authentic:—

He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Associate Presbytery of Kilmarnock, on the 17th of December, 1793. After about three and a half years' employment as a probationer, a part of which time was spent in Ireland, he was taken on trial for ordination, with a view of being sent on a mission to the State of Kentucky.

A particular application had been made to the General Associate Synod of Scotland, by several individuals residing in the State of Kentucky, for a supply of gospel ordinances. Kentucky, and that whole region west of the Allegheny Mountains, being in an almost wilderness condition. In answer to this application, the Synod chose two, who were willing to accept of the appointment, and sent them on that mission. These were Mr. Fulton and the Rev. Robert Armstrong, both of whom were ordained expressly for that mission to America. In the Christian Magazine for the year 1797, a periodical published for a number of years at Edinburgh, we find the following notice of Mr. Fulton's ordination. After having noticed the ordination of Mr. Armstrong, it is added:—

"On Wednesday, June 28th, 1797, at Craigend, near Perth, the Rev. Andrew Fulton, the other missionary to Kentucky, was set apart to the ministerial office by the Associate Presbytery of Perth. The Rev. Mr. Alexander Pringle, of Perth, who presided on the occasion, preached from Mark xvi. 15

and 20: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature. And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word, with signs following. Amen.'—Mr. Fulton having satisfied the Presbytery respecting his soundness in the faith, by answering the questions of the *Formula*, was set apart by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Mr. Pringle delivered an address suitable to the design of the mission. The Rev. Mr. Alexander Allan, of Cupar-Angus, preached in the afternoon, from Acts xxviii. 28: 'Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.' Seventeen ministers were present. The assembly was so large that the meeting-house could not contain a fourth part of their number. The whole work was gone about in the open air, with the most becoming decency and reverence."

Messrs. Fulton and Armstrong sailed for America on the 8th of August following their ordination, and arrived in New York on the 13th of October. They proceeded on without delay to the object of their mission. There being at that early period no regular public conveyance across the Allegheny Mountains, our missionaries traveled on foot from Carlisle, Pa. to Pittsburgh. When they reached Pittsburgh, the winter was about setting in, on which account, it was judged inexpedient for the brethren to attempt descending the Ohio river until the succeeding spring. They, therefore, remained in the neighborhood of Pittsburgh during the winter of 1797–8, and were employed in preaching in different congregations in the vicinity, during that time.

Early in the spring, the two brethren proceeded to the object of their mission. They descended the Ohio river to Limestone, now Maysville, in Kentucky, in one of the ordinary but rude boats, then the only kind of vessel used in conveying emigrants and merchandize, or produce down that stream, on which hundreds of majestic steamers are now continually plying. Kentucky, being at that time, the great point in the west to which the stream of emigration was flowing, our missionaries readily found others preparing for the same destination. They united with a family or two of emigrants in fitting out a boat for the voyage, and also performed their part of the labor in managing the boat.

On the 28th of November, 1798, after their arrival in Kentucky, in pursuance of the instructions and authority committed to them, the two brethren constituted a Presbytery, under the name of "The Associate Presbytery of Kentucky,"

which name was afterwards changed to that of "The Associate Presbytery of Miami," in consequence of both the brethren, with the principal part of the people under their Presbyterial care, removing from the State of Kentucky, and one of them, with a large proportion of the people, settling on the Miami river, Ohio. This removal was occasioned by the prevalence of slavery in the State of Kentucky. These brethren being conscientiously opposed to both the principle and the practice of slavery, and the Associate Synod of North America having judicially condemned that evil, they, with the great majority of the people adhering to them, judged that the most effectual way to free themselves from any participation in that sin, was to leave a community where it was legally sanctioned. But to return to Mr. Fulton in particular.

An extensive field for the dissemination of the gospel soon appeared in Kentucky, and frequent applications for supply of gospel ordinances were made to the Presbytery. Calls for their constant labors were soon received by each of the brethren. Mr. Fulton accepted the call from the congregation of Drennon's creek, in Henry county, where he labored with distinguished diligence and success for the space of seventeen years. The greater part, however, of his congregation, for the cause already assigned, removed to the State of Indiana, and located themselves near Madison, Jefferson county, where Mr. Fulton himself was removed by the authority of Presbytery, in November, 1815.

Here also, for the short time that he was spared to his people, the blessing of Zion's King appeared to attend his labors, and his congregations were rapidly increasing in numbers. But before three years had fully expired, a fever terminated his labors and his life. He died September 10th, 1818, in the sixty-third year of his age.

His death was attended with some circumstances of peculiar trial to his afflicted family. Within a few hours of his death, Mrs. Fulton gave birth to a son, who was named after his father, and is now prosecuting his studies.

His remains lie buried in the church-yard at Carmel, the principal branch of his charge. He left a widow, two daughters, and the son above mentioned. The children survive at this time. His wife was afterwards united in marriage to Col. Morrow, now of South Hanover, Ia., but has lately deceased; his eldest daughter became married to the Rev. James Adams, of Massie's creek, Ohio; his other daughter and son, yet unmarried, reside in the neighborhood of Xenia, Ohio.

From the manuscripts which Mr. Fulton left behind, it appears not to have been his practice to write out his sermons in full, yet he usually prepared notes containing the *particulars* of his discourse, with most of his illustrations. The application is generally wanting in his Mss. notes. The specimen herewith given, appears as fully written as any found among his notes, the abruptness of which, in its conclusions, must be obvious to every reader. It was first preached at a private house, near Madison, Ia., when one adult and five children were baptized; and although it has to appear under the disadvantage of being but an unfinished draft or outline, yet the simplicity, both of sentiment and style, the solid doctrine which it exhibits, and the fervent piety which it breathes, give it a just claim to a place in this volume, and cannot fail to commend it as a healthful and palatable repast to all readers who have a taste for "the sincere milk of the word."

The description given of the intellectual powers of both the missionaries, by the Rev. A. Pringle, of Perth, Scotland, in a letter to a friend in this country, was especially applicable to Mr. Fulton:—"Some," says he, "are perhaps endowed with more splendid talents; but their qualifications are of the solid, permanent, and useful kind—though they do not flash so much at first view, they improve and grow upon acquaintance; and will stand a winter's blast."

SERMON,

BY THE REV. ANDREW FULTON.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." (2 Pet. ii. 4.)

The first intimation that man had of God's boundless, everlasting love, was by promise. Our first parents were created perfectly holy and happy. But in that upright state man did not long continue; for through the temptation of Satan he fell into sin and misery from which he never could have recovered himself. Immediately after the fall, God having called our first parents before him; having arraigned and condemned them, concludes the august scene with an intimation of his love made by promise. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." The promises which God has since given his people, of which the first was a summary, are very many, great and glorious, as the apostle declares in the words of the text, "Hereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." The subject concerning which the apostle here speaks is *promises*. This is a most pleasant, a most delightful theme, especially if it be considered that the promises here referred to, are promises made by God to us. It might have been expected that we would have heard nothing from God except threatenings, because we have all transgressed his law. And then, instead of looking for glory, blessedness and life eternal, there would have been nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to devour us as adversaries. But there are given us by that God against whom we have sinned *exceeding great and precious promises*. A promise is a declaration made by one being or person unto another of the future bestowment of some good. When evil is declared it is not a promise but a threatening. It is not one promise only that God hath made to sinners, but many; and all these contain blessings most excellent in their nature. Hence the promises given to us are here said to be exceeding

great and precious. These two epithets are used by the apostle to set before us the inconceivable excellency of the promises. They are exceedingly great and precious. A promise is said to be great and precious, when the thing promised is of very great value. The promises which God hath given us are exceeding great and precious, because the blessings which he hath promised to bestow are intrinsically valuable and to be estimated above all price.

What I propose, in speaking a little further from this subject, through divine aid, is, in the *first* place, to offer some observations more *generally* concerning the nature of the promises: and then, in the *second* place, to mention some of their excellences, in order that you may perceive them to be *exceeding great and precious.*

Observe concerningt he nature of the promises—

1. All the promises of life and salvation made unto us in the Scriptures are to be considered as belonging to the new covenant, the covenant of grace. God entered into a covenant with the first Adam, which is commonly called a Covenant of Works. Now every true and proper covenant consists of a condition and a promise, something to be done by the one party, and something promised by the other. The first covenant had also a promise given. It was given upon condition of perfect compliance with God's holy will. But Adam transgressed the commandment of God and thereby forfeited all right to the promise, and entailed upon himself and his posterity the curse. So that by the old covenant there are no promises given us: by the works of the law no power is left us of obtaining salvation. But there is a new covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Grace, that was made from eternity, between the Father and the Son, and which stands fast for ever. By this covenant alone we are to look for life and salvation. The exceeding great and precious promises that are given unto us, are the promises of this Covenant of Grace. This covenant cannot be broken as the first was, because the parties contracting are the true and eternal God. The Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, has completely performed the conditions of it, and therefore the promises are sure to all the seed. He has obeyed the law and satisfied the justice of God in our room and place. He has entered into heaven itself as our great Forerunner, and is making continual intercession that the promised blessings may be bestowed upon all those that were given him by the Father, when the covenant was made. "Father, I will," says he, in

the 17th chapter of John, "that those also whom thou hast given me may be with me to behold my glory."

2. The promises proceed from the free love of a Three One God in the person of the Father. This is the first cause, and it is the source of our salvation. The whole proceeds from the free love, the sovereign grace of God. God was not moved to give forth promises of spiritual and eternal blessings to men, because of any thing truly excellent which he saw about them. For there is not any thing excellent about any of the human race in their natural state. It is said that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores." Every part of the man is defiled with the leprosy of sin; and sin is that abominable thing which God hateth. Now man hath voluntarily brought this evil upon himself. "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Man obeys the devil rather than God, and God might have left man to perish in his sin, as the fallen angels. The promises of salvation therefore which he has given, must proceed entirely from his gracious nature, from his sovereign grace. What God said of his ancient people may with propriety be said of his true Israel: That "he loved them, because he loved them."

3. The promises may be considered as being all made at first hand to Christ the Son of God, the Mediator of the new covenant. Hence the apostle speaks of grace being given us before the world began. (Tit. i. 2,) "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began." Before the world began none of the human race existed. It is only a Three One God that inhabiteth eternity. But the scriptures make mention of a counsel of peace between the Father and the Son, of an everlasting covenant concerning the salvation of sinners. It was mutually stipulated between these two divine persons, that the Son of God, should, on the one hand, in the fullness of time, become man, and that as our representing Head he should give perfect obedience to the divine law and endure the stroke of divine vengeance; all which he cheerfully engaged to do. Upon the other hand, the Father promised, to bestow eternal salvation upon an innumerable multitude of the human race, whom he gave to the Son as his spiritual seed to be by him represented, redeemed and eternally saved. It is accordingly aid of the Son of God, "He shall see his seed, he shall pro-

long his days, and the pleasure of the Lord, shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." And Jesus himself says to the Father, "I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were and thou gavest them me." Christ and his people being considered as one in the eye of the law and of the justice of God, the promises therefore made to him when the covenant was made between him and his Father, may be considered, as being made to his people in whose salvation only these promises were to be fulfilled.

4. These great and precious promises, which were primarily made by the Father to the Son, when the Covenant of Grace was constituted, are revealed and declared unto us by Christ Jesus, the only Mediator. No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him. God the Father never deals in a gracious manner with guilty sinners immediately, that is, without the intervention of a middle person. But all his gracious actions and operations with sinners are through Jesus Christ, the Mediator. The Lord Jesus Christ is appointed in the everlasting covenant, the prophet, priest and king of his people. Not only does the Lord Jesus as a king reign over Zion, subdue a people to himself, destroy sin and overcome all their enemies; not only does he as a priest make atonement for our sins, by the once offering up of himself; but also as a prophet he instructs us in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, he unfolds to us the everlasting purposes of love, which the Father in his own divine mind framed towards us from eternity; and this revelation, Christ our prophet makes by the promises of the New Covenant. Hence the Father proclaims by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Hear him, for he is appointed to declare unto you all the things that are necessary for you to hear. The Lord Jesus gives unto us a most true and faithful account of the Father's eternal purposes of love. He is the AMEN, the Faithful and True WITNESS.

5. These great and precious promises are all made to us through Christ. They are not only given to us by him, but made to us through him, through his person and work. The blood of Christ is the only channel of communication in which the promised blessings flow to guilty sinners. Hence it is said by the apostle Paul, that all the promises of God are in him, yea, and amen to the glory of God by us. It can not indeed be said, with propriety, that Christ, by his obedi-

ence and death, purchased the love of God. For this love is infinite, most sovereign and free. Neither can the promises themselves be said to be purchased, because the promises are to be considered as one constituent part of the Covenant of Grace. But the blessings contained in the promises, may be said to be purchased, or at least the purchase of Christ (which he made of his people) may be considered as the channel of communication in which these promised blessings flow to sinners. There would never have been a promise made to us by God, of obtaining the blessings of salvation, if the Son of God had not undertaken our cause, and as our surety, priest and representing Head, made atonement for our sins. It would, therefore, be exceedingly foolish and vain for any one to expect promised blessings in any other way, than through the obedience and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord our God is a God infinitely pure, just and holy. He is also full of compassion, love and grace. But it is only in the salvation of sinners through Christ, that these divine perfections are seen to harmonize.

6. In the dispensation of the gospel, all the promises of the New Covenant are made to all men who hear the joyful sound, without any exception: or the blessings contained in the promises, are freely exhibited and offered to all men. It is true, indeed, that in the words of the text, the apostle says, "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." By the word us, he certainly intends in a peculiar manner, all true believers, including himself. For it is to true believers in an especial manner, that he directs this epistle, as may be seen in the first verse: "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us." But then these promises are not, in the external dispensation of them, made to believers exclusively, but inclusive of all others who hear the gospel. For this same apostle, when preaching to a vast multitude on the day of Pentecost, says to them all, indiscriminately, "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The greater part of his hearers, were at that time unbelievers. Yet he addresses them all with these precious words, "The promise is to you." So, in like manner I declare unto you, in the name of the great Head of the Church, that the promise is to YOU and to YOUR CHILDREN, and to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. God promises to give to you, and to every one who hears, salvation from sin and misery, and to bring you to the complete enjoyment of happiness, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notwithstanding that you have sinned against him, times and ways without number, yet there is plenteous redemption for you in Christ. There is nothing that can exclude you from happiness, except you obstinately refuse Christ, and the plan of salvation through him. But if you really believe that God will give life and salvation to you through Christ, you shall certainly have it. "For he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

7. True believers only, have an actual interest in these great and precious promises. For by faith they take hold of God's Covenant of Grace; and in this way they are brought within the bond of the covenant. Like David, they are pleased with the whole tenor of the New Covenant. In their view, it is well ordered in all things and sure. This is all their salvation and all their desire. In a particular manner they lay hold on some gracious promise contained in the holy scriptures, such as the following: "I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." It is upon the footing of these or other gracious promises, that the sinner, viewing God as reconciled in Christ, says in the language taught us in the prophet, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Thus he who was a poor, destitute sinner, becomes, like Isaac, an heir of the promise, and shall undoubtedly in due time be put in full possession of the inheritance.

In the *second* place, in order, if possible, to recommend these promises to your esteem, I am to mention some of their excellencies, for "they are exceeding great and precious."

1. They are great and precious with respect to their author. It is the great God of heaven and earth, who hath given us the promises of life and salvation through Christ Jesus. You know that among men, a promise made by one possessed of great riches and dignity and power, is usually more highly esteemed than the promise of one in the lower spheres of life; partly because of the ability of the person in high station, to perform his promise; but chiefly because it indicates that he to whom the promise is made, is an object of favor. Now, does it not set forth and illustrate the greatness, the excellence, the precious nature of the promises of the New Covenant, that they are all given us by God, who is possessed of all perfection, glory and blessedness? He is the fountain whence every good and perfect gift proceeds. None, surely,

can question the ability of Jehovah to perform. He is the Almighty, and has all fullness in himself. All power is in his hand. And, then, again, are not these promises of the New Covenant which he has given us, a very strong evidence of his favor and love towards poor, needy sinners? Next to his sending his own Son, his well-beloved, into our world, to redeem sinners from the curse of the law, which blessing he exhibited to the church under the old dispensation, by types and prophecies, which are now accomplished and may be considered as the grand evidence of God's love to a lost world; next to this, the greatest evidence that God has given of his love to sinners of our fallen family, is the fact that through Christ he hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.

2. These promises are great and precious with respect to the matter contained in them. How highly does a condemned criminal, among men, esteem the promise of pardon? Oh! how much more precious is that promise of forgiveness, which God hath given us, who are by nature the children of wrath, even as others! Great as this blessing is, it is one of the promises which God hath given us. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." If any one among men were to promise to bequeath or to make over to another, a large sum of silver and gold, or a very large estate, the promise would be justly reckoned great. How inconceivably greater is the promise which God hath given us, of the true riches of the heavenly inheritance! "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed unto me." The promise of assistance, when one is under some pressing difficulty, is justly reckoned great, although it be from a fellow creature. Oh! how inconceivably greater is the promise which God hath given us, never, never to leave nor forsake us! "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." Thus we might go over all the promises. We will find them all to be exceeding great and precious.

3. The promises of the New Covenant are great and precious, because they are all of them most free. They are not clogged with conditions to be performed on our part, before we may lay claim to the blessings promised. Some of the

promises appear at first view to be conditional, such as this: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But faith is only to be considered as a condition of connection, or, in other words, faith is absolutely necessary on the part of the sinner, as the means of investing him in the blessings of salvation. But it should be carefully observed, that this same faith, which seems to be the condition of salvation in this last cited promise, and others, is itself made the matter of absolute promise in other passages of scripture. It is said, for example, "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced."

4. These promises are exceeding great and precious, if we consider that they are all infallibly true. However great a promise may be, with respect to the author, and the matter which it contains, and however truly it be made, yet if a suspicion should arise in our minds about its truth in point of fulfillment, it will not be great and precious to us. But in the case before us, the promise is made by the unchangeable God, who cannot lie, who has both power and will to fulfill it; and who for the confirmation of our faith, has added to his promise his oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

5. Another excellence of the promises is, that they are all most suitable to us in our several necessitous cases. Life, light, liberty, pardon, adoption, sanctification and eternal glory, are blessings which we all unquestionably need: and these are some of the blessings contained in the promises.

Inference 1. The wonderful love of God, in giving us such exceeding great and precious promises.

2. The unreasonableness, and the damning nature of unbelief.

3. The happiness of those who have obtained an interest in the promises.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. THOMAS HAMILTON.

Mr. Hamilton is the only native American minister, of the Associate Church, whose life we have been called upon to sketch in this volume. Our first supply of ministers had, of necessity, to come from the parent church, in the land of our fathers. And according to the ordinary course of human events, these might be expected to be first removed.

Mr. Hamilton was a native of the county of Washington, near the borough of Washington, in the state of Pennsylvania; of which county his father was a highly respectable citizen, and for some time held the office of high sheriff of the county. He had an elder brother, George, who succeeded his father in the sheriff's office, of the same county. As his father was much engaged in public business, it is probable that Mr. Hamilton was chiefly indebted, as a means, to the early instructions of a pious mother, for his first religious impressions.

And although we are not in possession of such facts as would warrant our speaking very particularly of his first religious impressions; yet we are authorized to say, that he early gave indications of a serious and pious turn of mind, and of an inclination to devote himself to the work of the ministry; which was properly and prudently cherished by his friends. Mr. Hamilton received the rudiments of his education at the grammar school at Canonsburgh, Pa., which has since risen to the rank of a college, of a highly respectable literary character. But he completed his collegiate course at Dickinson college, at Carlisle, Pa.

He entered the study of theology under the care of the late Dr. Anderson, in what may be called the first *class* of students educated in the Associate Church in America; two students only having been previously licensed, and these sepa-

rately. [See Introduction, p. 105.] This class consisted, besides Mr. H., of Messrs. Ebenezer Henderson, Thomas Alison and Samuel Murdoch;* and completed their course under the care of the professor, about the year 1800, or 1801. They were immediately afterwards taken on trial for license to preach the everlasting gospel; to which, after due trial, they were admitted.†

After Mr. Hamilton had preached for some time in other vacancies of the Associate Church, he was sent to supply in the city of New-York; where, as has already been noticed, (Introduction, p. 79,) a congregation had been organized, by Mr. Beveridge, in the spring of 1785. Although that congregation contained, at its organization, men of distinguished energy and zeal in supporting and extending the Secession cause; such as Mr. Gosman, Mr. Wright, and others, whose names are doubtless familiar to many still living in the Associate Church; yet it appears that for at least fifteen years after the organization of the congregation, it remained destitute of a settled dispensation of gospel ordinances: a circumstance which is doubtless to be ascribed chiefly to the paucity of ministers and preachers, during that period, in the Associate Church in this country. Some time before Mr. Hamilton was sent to New-York, Mr. F. Pringle, late Clerk of Synod, had arrived in New-York and supplied there for several months. The congregation, desirous of obtaining a stated dispensation of ordinances, and judging themselves able to support a minister, resolved on taking measures to have either Mr. Hamilton or Mr. Pringle settled among them. When the vote of the congregation was taken for this purpose, it appeared that Mr. Hamilton was the choice of the majority. He accordingly received the call, which he accepted, and was ordained to the office of the ministry, and installed pastor of the congregation early in the summer of 1802. Some of those, however, who voted for Mr. Pringle did not acquiesce in the choice of the majority with that cordiality which would have been desirable, and indeed, which duty in such cases requires. This was a source of some grief to Mr. Hamilton, and not less re-

* Now Doctor Samuel Murdoch, of Washington, Pennsylvania, who, after completing a regular theological course of studies, turned his attention to the study of medicine. He has been long known to the public, as a scientific and successful practitioner of medicine, as well as for his exemplary and consistent Christian deportment.

† An apology is due to the public and the friends of Mr. H. for the want of exactness respecting this and some other dates which should have been given in this sketch. The paper on which the memoranda were entered has been mislaid, and the loss was not discovered until it was too late to remedy it, without delaying the publication.

pugnant to the feelings of Mr. Pringle, when he learned it, and a cause, at least in some degree, of retarding the prosperity of the congregation.

In connection with the ordination of Mr. Hamilton, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was also dispensed in the congregation. Dr. Banks, then of Cambridge, preached the ordination sermon, and Mr. Marshall presided at the dispensation of the sacrament of the Supper. This was an occasion, it may be hoped, of refreshing to *many*; we can speak with certainty that it was long remembered by *one* of God's people.*

About a year and a half after his settlement in New-York, Mr. Hamilton was happily united in marriage to one of the daughters of the late William Young, esqr., of Philadelphia; in whom Mr. Hamilton found a companion who could sympathize with him in his trials and encourage him in his duties. Mrs. Hamilton having been early instructed in the religious principles of the Associate Church, principles which she herself conscientiously approved; and having been all her life under the influence of a strictly religious example, in her father's house, (her parents were equally distinguished for their piety and intelligence,) she was highly qualified to make Mr. Hamilton both an agreeable and a profitable companion. Besides her religious attainments Mrs. H. possessed a mind well furnished with every qualification necessary to make her both a useful and an ornamental member of society.

Mr. Hamilton continued to discharge the pastoral duties in the congregation, with affectionate diligence and care, for a period of about sixteen years, when the hand of disease arrested his labors. After a considerable time of indisposition,

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* The late Mr. Alexander Bachop, merchant, of Argyle, N. Y., who departed this life on Sabbath, the second day of December, 1833, and whose name has long been familiarly known to all who have taken an interest in the annals of the Associate Church, for his uniform liberality to every measure that tended to advance the cause of the Redeemer's kingdom; and who through an extensive community was proverbial for his singular honesty, in all his business transactions, and universally venerated for his meek and unaffected piety, and for his conscientious regard to the principles and practice of his Christian profession. In reference to the above mentioned occasion, a short time before his decease, and in near prospect of that solemn event, in a letter to the writer of this sketch, Mr. B., after mentioning some symptoms of the progress of his disease, makes use of the following remarkable language: "I have a strong impression that my days are almost at an end. Pray for me, that I may be enabled to go safely through the valley and shadow of death, and be kept from evil. Since the worthy Mr. Marshall dispensed our Lord's Supper in New-York, in the year 1802, I have not been in doubts about an interest in Christ Jesus; which has been a great support to me, but I have fallen often into improper exercises. I could not believe that a saint would forget himself so much, if I had not the experience of it."

in the month of August, 1818, Mr. Hamilton resigned his spirit into the hands of his God. His age was probably forty-five.

Mrs. Hamilton, after her husband's death, returned with her children to her native city, where she survived him about ten years. Besides his widow, Mr. Hamilton left two sons and a daughter. His eldest son, William Young Hamilton, has devoted himself to the work of the ministry of reconciliation, and is now laboring in the gospel field, under the direction of the Associate Synod; the other son and daughter have some time since gone to the house appointed for all living.

Mr. Hamilton was diligent, faithful and affectionate in his labors among the people. An air of unaffected solemnity diffused itself through all his exercises, evincing the solemn sense he had of the important trust committed to his charge—that of co-operating with his ascended Redeemer, in promoting the salvation of souls.

In manners he was amiable, unaffected, and retiring; and although free and sociable with his friends, yet the same solemn and affectionate seriousness which distinguished his public exercises, visibly pervaded also his social intercourse. He lived and looked like a man, whose sole aim was to do his Master's work.

In person Mr. Hamilton was tall and slender, with a general appearance indicating a delicate constitution, but of a prepossessing countenance.

It will be a matter of surprise, to those especially who are unacquainted with the rapid changes which the character of a congregation sometimes undergoes, situated in a city such as New-York, to learn, that now, only about twenty years since Mr. Hamilton ceased from his labors, but a remnant of a congregation is to be found adhering to the cause of the Associate Church, in the place where he labored so long and so faithfully. It is enough, however, here to say, that the change can be readily traced to the operation of subsequent causes, and is in no respect to be ascribed to any want of fidelity or diligence on the part of Mr. Hamilton.

The annexed specimens of his ordinary pulpit exercises, as well as another recently made public in the Religious Monitor, (See Vol. XV.,) are highly creditable to his intellectual powers, and the accuracy of his theological attainments.

SERMON,

BY THE REV. THOMAS HAMILTON.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." (Revelation xx. 11, 12.)

BRETHREN,

There is a day approaching, in which God will judge the world in righteousness; a day, in which an assembled universe shall stand before his decisive bar, and receive a final and irrevocable sentence, according to their respective works; a sentence consigning the wicked over to everlasting perdition, and admitting the righteous to everlasting happiness. Many awful and important events have taken place since the era of the creation, in the revolutions of kingdoms, in which sometimes the general interests of mankind were materially affected. Empires have risen and fallen, according to the sovereign determinations of him whose kingdom ruleth over all. But in comparison with the great and important event of the general judgment, of the final decisions, which God, as the supreme governor of the world, will make upon the eternal states of all his rational creatures, they shrink into matters of trivial consequence. It will be an event of infinite importance to every individual within these walls. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and every one of us must give an account of himself to God. Hence, the account of this event obtains a conspicuous place in all the writings of the inspired penmen. It was announced at a very early period of the world, by Enoch, the seventh from Adam, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment." (Jude xiv. 15.) This was confirmed by almost all the inspired heralds who lived under the Old Testament. In particular, the Psalmist cries out, "Let the heavens rejoice and be glad before the Lord, for he cometh

to judge the world: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." (Ps. xcvi. 12, 13.) It was expressly foretold by Christ himself, Math. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi. It is ranked in Heb. vi. 1, 2, among the fundamental articles of christianity. And accordingly, we find it most magnificently described in vision by the apostle John, near the close of the inspired canon. Nay, the last verse but one is a solemn asseveration by him who is to be the judge, concerning the certainty of the event: "Surely, I come quickly." From all this, brethren, appear the necessity and propriety of bringing this subject frequently into our contemplations in God's sanctuary. And, O, that we may be enabled to contemplate it in such a manner as to triumph in prospect of it, saying, "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus." Remember, that though many may be unconcerned hearers—yet there will be no unconcerned spectators of the awful scenes which open in our text. Every individual in the countless assembly, which shall stand before the decisive bar, will feel himself deeply interested in all the transactions of that tremendous day. The deepest solicitude will heave in every breast, and reign conspicuous in every countenance. Even angels shall feel anxiety for the issue of that day. "The powers of heaven shall be shaken." The visionary representation which we have in the passage before us, is accommodated to our view of judicial process among men. We have the throne or judgment seat—the judge, the objects of judicial process, the rule of it, the evidence of the facts to be tried, and the final sentence, as the issue of the whole. But, besides this, no doubt there will be a number of introductory circumstances to the awful transactions of that day. Of these, we shall take equal notice with those which are precisely exhibited in the vision before us. The approach of the judgment will be announced by some awful and magnificent signals, which will strike the world with terror and dismay. Some writers have given us an account, particularly Mr. Ambrose, of a series of wonders which shall appear for some days previous to the judgment. Respecting these, we are not qualified to say any thing, either for or against them. However, we are authorized from scripture to assert:

1. That there will be the sign of the Son of man, according to Matt. xxiv. 30, "And there shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Some think this will be the personal appearance of the Judge himself. But it appears harsh and absurd, to call the appearance of Christ, the sign of his appearance. The sign of his coming, and the personal act of

coming, are distinguished by Christ himself: "There shall appear the sign of the Son of man," in consequence of which, it is observed, all the tribes of the earth should mourn under awful apprehensions of the coming of their Judge. And then, it is observed, they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, that is, their apprehensions are realized. Whether it will be the appearance of some luminous body in heaven, or some most magnificent ensign or standard displayed to announce the approach of the King of glory, with all his hosts, or whether it may be some emblematical representation of the judgment, or of the Judge, it is impossible for us to determine. It is evident it will be visible, glorious, becoming the magnificent scenery and transactions which are to follow; that unspeakable horror and astonishment will seize the guilty minds of those who shall see this awful phenomenon, without ever having seen by faith him whom it represents. How will it make them reel and stagger; their knees smite; and their hearts become feeble as water, under prospect of the awful perdition which awaits them! How can their hearts endure or their hands be strong in that moment? On the other hand, what joy will it inspire into the minds of the righteous, when they see their redemption drawing nigh? What sublime joy, what grateful astonishment. will the discovery of this sign excite in the minds of those who shall then be waiting for the coming of the Lord; but these respective sensations of horror and joy will likely be but momentary, as they will be succeeded,

2. By the awful clangor of the last trumpet bursting through the heavens—the voice of the arch-angel summoning the parties to appear before the decisive tribunal: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." This voice, accompanied with divine energy, shall be heard by the generations of the dead, who shall immediately burst from the confinement of the grave. Hence, says Christ, when speaking of this omnipotent call to the dead, "all that are in their graves shall hear this voice, and shall come forth." Then those bodies, which enjoyed perfect repose amidst all the convulsions of earthquakes, the thunder of the skies, and artillery of war, shall shake off the sleep of death and spring into animated existence, and advance towards the decisive bar. What commotion will be excited by this awful trumpet in charnel-houses, in grave yards, and other repositories of the dead. How will the living be surprised to see and feel new generations springing up among their feet, bursting into life—to feel the ground heaving beneath them, and countless numbers starting up before their

eyes, as heirs of immortality, and advancing in awful procession to the great white throne. How glorious and magnificent will the visible agency of the angels appear in that awful moment: for it is said he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather his elect from every quarter of the globe. See them darting round the globe in eager flight, in joyful competition, to execute the last kind offices to those who enjoyed their ministrations during life, to assist them in their resurrection—tear asunder the vaults of mortality, assist them in laying aside their grave-clothes, to collect the scattered members of their body—their previous dust, now to be arranged into forms of immortality, and to bear them on their wings to meet the Lord in the air.

In the same moment, behold the transformation of the righteous resident on the earth; see them from clods of earth brightening into suns, into most glorious forms of immortality, and ascending with their risen brethren. (1 Thess. iii. 17,) "We that are alive and remain," says the apostle, "shall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

What surprise will it excite in the minds of the wicked on earth, to see their neighbors, their acquaintances, undergo such a sudden change, both with respect to their appearance and situation! What shrieks of horror will it produce to find themselves left behind on the earth, to be dragged as reluctant criminals to the judgment seat, whilst they are wafted up under angelic convoy to sit at Christ's right hand! What awful distinction will be made among the living at that day! Hence, our Lord tells us, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left; two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left."

3. The next thing in this awful day, will be the appearance of the Judge, pursuant to the sign of his coming, and the sound of the last trumpet. Hence, the apostle represents the dead in Christ, whose resurrection shall take place on the sound of the trump of God, as being caught up along with the living in Christ, who shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye to *meet* the Lord in the *air*, which supposes a progressive motion on both sides, while they ascend from the earth, he will descend from the heavens. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Now he bursts through the visible heavens, which shall pass away with a great noise, be rolled together as a scroll or curtain. Behold his banners waving majestic across the heaven, and his shining courtiers,

and countless hosts, filling the skies. Now, the powers of heaven shall be shaken ; the orbs of light shall be turned into darkness, from the superior glory of his countenance. Nay, they shall drop from their spheres, run into mutual confusion, and the earth shall totter to its centre, and be removed from its foundation. Hence, the apostle represents the heaven and earth flying from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne. How justly, therefore, does the apostle represent it as the glorious appearing of the great God. (Tit. ii. 13.)

It is Christ who is to be Judge. All power in heaven is given to him as God-man, Mediator. It is true, God the Father is sometimes represented as being Judge. But there is no real inconsistency in this representation, as it is by the Son that the Father judges the world. Hence, says the apostle, "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained." The Father judgeth no man personally, but only by delegating that supreme judiciary power which is vested in the Godhead, to Christ. Hence we are told, John v. 27, that "the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man." It was necessary, as a reward of his voluntary humiliation. (Phil. ii. 8–10.) It was fit that he who was judged and condemned in human nature, should in the same judge the world in righteousness. It was necessary, that he who had stood before the tribunal of men, should, in due time, call men to stand before his tribunal. As God-man, he is better qualified to execute judiciary power, than if he had only been God. For, besides the possession of those divine perfections, viz. knowledge, wisdom, justice and power, which enable him to pass a just and righteous sentence, and to put it into execution—he is qualified in this character to execute his office in such a way, as will not only affect the moral perception, but even the senses of mankind. He will appear to the eye of an assembled universe, as sitting upon a glorious throne. They will be sisted before a visible bar, and in their ears he will audibly pronounce sentence upon them. This will be equally transporting to the righteous, and terrible to the wicked, to those who had rejected and despised him. What transports will the view of the Saviour and Judge, in human nature, produce in the minds of his people! What terror will it inspire into the minds of his enemies, especially those who maltreated, persecuted, insulted and crucified him in that nature! How will they be troubled and confounded at his presence! Hence his visible presence is represented as a circumstance which would occasion much distress, and

anguish in the minds of his enemies. They shall see the sign of the Son of Man, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn." This last passage may respect unbelievers as well as believers.

In this character, as the great God and as our Saviour Jesus Christ, he will make a glorious appearing, as the supreme Judge of the world. He will be, in this capacity, distinguished by a three-fold glory: by the glory of his angels, his own glory and the glory of his Father. (Luke ix. 26.) He will appear in his own glory, that glory which is competent to him as God-man. This will be inconceivably great. It appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus, as surpassing the lustre of the meridian sun, and struck him blind to the ground. Upon a like display, it struck the apostle John as dead to the ground. And we have every reason to believe, that it will exceeed these displays.

2. He will appear in the glory of his Father, or that glory which is competent to him as God. But who can describe the nature of it? Who can delineate the blaze of divine glory which will encompass his throne? When he gave a display of it at Mount Sinai, it was like devouring fire. All the displays which he made of his essential glory under the Old Testament, were under the symbol of fire. Hence, at the great day his throne will be enveloped in flame. Hence says the Psalmist, (Psal. l,) "A fire shall devour before him, it shall be very tempestuous round about him." And says the apostle, (2 Thess. i. 7, 8,) "He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Dan. vii. 9, 10,) "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool, his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened." It is evident he will appear under all the magnificence of infinite majesty. He is represented as sitting upon a great white throne, to point out the majesty of him who sits upon it, the importance, and righteousness of the decision he is to make, and the sentence which he is to award. Of what this throne will consist, it is not for us positively to determine. Likely it will be a very bright and luminous cloud, infinitely more so than any we have ever seen. The angels tell the

apostles, (Acts i. 2,) that Jesus would return in the same way in which he departed, viz. on a cloud. And again, "Behold he cometh with clouds."

He will come in the glory of the angels. Enoch prophesied, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints," and says the apostle, "He will be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels." Says Daniel, "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." The angels will then be clothed in robes of the highest glory and dignity, such as will become the occasion. It is highly probable they will assume some visible shape, for the greater glory and magnificence of Christ's appearance, who will be seated on a visible throne. What heart can conceive, or tongue express the magnificence of this appearance, and the terror which it will inspire into the minds of the ungodly? A judge of unsearchable wisdom, inflexible justice, irresistible power, and infinite majesty—A throne awfully magnificent, with the ensigns, and symbols of of those perfections, enwrapped with a devouring fire, and guarded with flaming cherubims, and surrounded by attendants as countless as the stars, and each of them more glorious than the meridian sun! Then the hearts of the most obdurate, will melt, and become feeble as water. Then those who scorned subjection to the divine law, who laughed at the threatenings of God's word, at the idea of judgment to come, will see their mistake—with shrieks of horror, shall turn away from the face of the judge, and cry to the rocks and to the mountains to fall upon them and cover them, saying, "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand." Whatever men think now, they will then find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, to appear before the tribunal of an incensed Jehovah, whose fury is poured out like fire.

4. But next turn your eye to the countless millions which will move in awful procession to the decisive bar. What a vast assembly! How diversified by age, sex, and condition! I saw (says John) the dead, small and great, stand before God. Every individual of the human race, from Adam to his youngest son, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, young and old, must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Many in this world are too great to be brought to an account for their conduct, and some are too mean to be thought worthy of judicial notice. But no degree of rank or condition will then be taken notice of, All civil distinction will be abolished. The prince and the beggar will stand on

a level. An Alexander or a Cæsar—those who made the earth to tremble by their authority, will be equally responsible with the meanest of their vassals. No elevation of rank, no species of power, possessed in this world, will in the least degree alleviate, much less protect from the terrors of that awful day. Those who waved the conqueror's banner over affrighted kingdoms, will now tremble before the Lord of hosts, who is a man of war. Those who swayed a lordly sceptre over millions of their fellow men, will now bow to Him, whose kingdom ruleth over all. Those who balanced the scale of justice among men, in the exercise of judicial power, before whose tribunals their fellow creatures trembled with fear, will now have to stand as pannels before the Judge of the universe. Those who would not bow before a throne of grace, must now bow before a throne of judgment. Those who would not confess the divine power and goodness in this world, will now be compelled to acknowledge them before men, angels and devils. Those who have been associates in sin, will now be associated in judgment, for the mutual aggravation of their guilt and punishment. Then the jovial sons of sensuality, who gave full scope to every appetite, who thronged the board of luxury, handed round the cup of intoxication, and surrounded the altar of concupiscence, will now have to stand under mutual guilt, have all their scenes of debauchery exposed to an assembled universe. In a word, all the crimes of the ungodly, all the abominations of the heart, all the enormities of the life, whether known or unknown to the world, will be announced, probably by the voice of the Arch-angel, to an assembled world. This will convince them of the omniscience of Deity, which they once would have fondly called in question. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." And how will they tremble at the disclosure, how will they grow pale under conviction of guilt, and be covered with the utmost confusion. How fondly would they then shrink into impenetrable darkness, from the face of the Lamb. But they will have to stand forth before the view of all, until they receive their sentence and sink into the blackness of darkness forever. Then, many characters which lay under a cloud in this world, will brighten up; and many which appeared fair and irreproachable, will be covered with spots of the deepest dye.

As to the disclosure and publication of the sins of the righteous, on the great day, there is a variety of opinions. That they will not come into judgment of condemnation, is incontestibly evident. Yet many think that their evil as well as

their good works, will be published on that day. And there are some scriptures which favor the opinion. "It is said, God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." But then this passage may be taken distributively, and not collectively, meaning every good work of the saints, and every evil work of sinners.

In Christ's account of the process of the general judgment, there is no mention made of the publication of their sins, but only of their good works, as an evidence of their justification. And as their sins are taken away, and covered by an act of judicial absolution in this life, it is not at all likely that they will be brought into judgment, which will be only a confirmation and display of this act. Has God declared that he will remember the iniquities of his people no more, and will he after this revive them in this most public manner? Should Christ permit the hand-writing of ordinances which was against his people; but which he took out of the way and nailed to his cross, to be read over again, it would appear as if he had repented of his undertaking, or that the efficacy and merit of his death were called in question.

However, it is abundantly evident that the good works of the righteous, as the evidence of their justification, and the evil works of the wicked as the evidence and ground of their condemnation, will be published in the most explicit manner: says John, "And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life," &c. It is by these records that the issue of the process is to be regulated, rewards conferred, and punishment inflicted.

By the books we may understand the law, the gospel, the book of God's remembrance, the book of conscience, and the book of life. The two first of these books will be used as the *rule* of judgment. By these the character and works of men will be tried. Those who enjoyed only the law of nature will be tried by that law, by their conformity or non-conformity to its dictates. Hence says the Apostle, (Rom. ii. 12,) "As many as have sinned without law shall perish without law." Again, those who enjoy the written law, which is always connected with the gospel, will be judged by both their conformity to the precepts of the former, and their improvement of the privileges and promises of the latter. Hence those who reject both the law and the gospel will fall under the vengeance of both. And, therefore, the condemnation of unbelievers will infinitely surpass that of the heathen world.

Again, the books of God's remembrance and of conscience will be opened, as evidence of men's works and character.

Hence men are said to be judged according to their works, and not according to faith; because their works will be fruits or evidences of their faith, or of their unbelief.

Though the omniscient God stands in no need of such evidence of the character or state of men, yet it will be necessary for the conviction of beholders concerning the equity of the sentence which shall be passed. And it is the opinion of some, that the wicked, though convinced of the truth of the charges exhibited against them, will endeavor to deny them, saying, "Lord when saw we thee an hungered," &c. "We have prophesied and cast out devils in thy name," &c.

In which case it will be necessary to produce evidence of the facts, for the satisfaction of those who are present, and eternally to silence the wicked. The last book which shall be opened is the book of life, in which are registered all the names of the election of grace of those which were given to Christ to be redeemed. Hence it is called the Lamb's book of life. That is, God will publish his eternal decree of mercy, in which will be specified the names of his elect ones. This will be necessary to show that Christ has given eternal life to as many as God has given him, that he has lost none of them. Hence he is represented as saying, "Lo, here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me." It will be necessary to silence all objections to the sovereignty of divine grace, to show that the distribution which shall be made that day depends upon it; "that he will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy," &c. What transports of joy in the minds of the righteous, what sensations of terror in the wicked, will the opening of the book of life, the publication of the decree of election excite! With what ravished ears will the righteous hear their names proclaimed before an sssembled universe as the objects of eternal love—what looks of grateful adoration will they raise to their incarnate Saviour! How will their hearts burn with love! swell with sensations of ecstasy and delight?

On the other hand, how will the wicked sink under impressions of despair, when they find their names passed over! What awful distinction will now be made! What distressful separation will now take place! Who can bear up under the thought! Husband and wife who have spent a life time in mutual fondness and embraces, now eternally separated. Parents and children who had such mutual delight in one another; ministers and people, who had kept a life time of solemn holy-days; neighbors and acquaintances, who sat on the same seats, at the same communion table; masters and servants,

brothers and sisters who lay in the same womb, now eternally separated; some moving to the right others to the left hand, taking their place to receive final sentence. What bitter reflections and execrations may we suppose the wicked will now pour upon one another! How will companions of sin, who have been the mutual promoters of each other's ruin, curse one another from the heart! How will children curse their parents, and servants their masters, for being unfaithful to their souls, for neglecting to give them religious instruction, and pressing upon them the practice of piety and holiness! How will it sting the hearts of ungodly parents, to see a numerous offspring pressing around them, rendered frightful by despairing looks, covered with anguish, lamenting the unnatural indulgence of their parents, their cruelty in neglecting to administer seasonable instruction and reproof! How will gospel hearers curse their unfaithful ministers, who prophesied smooth things, and cried peace! peace! who neglected to give them seasonable warning of the wrath which was to come, and faithful discoveries of the way of escape!

On the other hand, what joyful congratulations will prevail among the righteous as they advance to the right hand. What joy and gratitude will many express for the seasonable instruction and reproof they got from their religious neighbors and acquaintances, which were blessed for their conversion and edification. And what mutual rejoicing will there be between faithful ministers and their people, who have been saved through their instrumentality. Hence, says the Apostle to the Thessalonians, (1st epistle, ii. 19,) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming?"

5. But in the next place, Hark! the Judge rises to pronounce the sentence, first upon those who are on his right hand, which will be in these words, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" This sentence will no doubt be pronounced with an audible voice by the man Christ Jesus; a voice full of majesty and power; a voice which will re-echo with energy over an assembled universe, now standing in awful suspense to receive its doom. What heart can conceive the glorious import of this sentence; what ravishing joy will it inspire into the minds of the ransomed of the Lord! Hark! what shouts of praise burst from their lips in joyful concert, which are answered by notes of extatic congratulation from every angelic lyre. But on the other hand, behold the throbbing hearts, the despairing looks and trembling joints of those on

the left hand, waiting to receive their sentence and begin their hell. They cannot sustain the countenance of the Judge, how then will they bear the thunder of his voice, accompanied with a flash of vengeance, pronouncing their doom, "Depart from me ye cursed." &c. "Take them devils," &c.

What shrieks of horror, what a tremendous roar of desperation will now burst from this countless assembly, descending under the arrest of relentless devils, into the regions of damnation. Now there is no way of escape; those who eluded the threatenings of God's word in the day of their merciful visitation will now find them to be inevitable. There will now be a yawning gulf below them, powerful and merciless devils around them, and streams of unmixed vengeance bursting from above on their devoted heads. Likely the general conflagration will then commence, the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth with the works thereof be burnt up, the mountains quake, the hills melt, and the rocks thrown down: the divine fury will now be literally poured out like fire; all the magazines of flame contained in the earth will burst from confinement, and bellow, and blaze, and involve the atmosphere from pole to pole. The foundations of the mountains will be set on fire. The Alps, the Appenines and Andes shall be lost in one common blaze, the earth itself will be an immense volcano. Then, brethren, who can stand before His indignation; who can abide the fierceness of His anger?

But whilst the earth burns, whilst the damned descend, behold the ransomed of the Lord with Christ at their head and angels for their convoy, ascending, marching up the skies, treading among the stars, waving their banners, and filling the heavens with shouts of triumph. "Sing praise to God," &c.

Now see the pearly gates of heaven flung open to receive the King of glory with all his shining hosts. See his ransomed ones taking their seats around his throne. Hark! how the heavenly vaults ring with hallelujahs to Him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb. Anthems of praise burst from every tongue. A holy emulation reigns through every note, dictated by the most ecstatic sensations of joy and gratitude. "Unto him that loved us," &c.

Oh! believer, how may you rejoice in prospect of that day, which is to complete your glory and your triumph, and put you in full possession of the heavenly inheritance. Well may you love and long for the appearing of the Great God, even your Saviour Jesus Christ, who is to confer upon you a crown of immortal glory. Well may you say "Haste my beloved, be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains," &c.

,'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." Well may you bear with patience the trials you meet with in this world—calumny, reproach, poverty, affliction, sickness, nay even death itself. In that day your character will be vindicated against every malignant aspersion. "He will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." All the hard speeches of a wicked world, all the criminating suggestions of a tempting devil will then be publicly refuted. Again, are you poor in this world? In that day you will be proclaimed heir of a kingdom and a crown of immortal glory. Are you not only poor but an afflicted person? In that day you will be rendered completely happy; you will return to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon your heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Every ground of sorrow and affliction, whether personal or relative, shall then be removed. Again, is your happiness often interrupted by the attacks of disease? Do you feel the principles of mortality operating in your constitution? In that day you will be cloathed with immortality.

On the other hand, what ground have unbelievers to tremble in prospect of this day, when their doom is to be determined, when they will be publicly arraigned, tried and condemned by Christ, for their contempt and rejection of his kind offers and tenders of mercy and salvation. He who now pleads with them from a mercy seat, to be reconciled unto him, will then condemn them from his judgment seat, punish them with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

How shocking therefore is their stupidity. Not being capable of being impressed by the mercy and grace of the gospel, nor the terrors of a judgment day. But let them know of a certainty, though they are sleeping in security, their damnation sleeps not. It is hastening on, and every day brings them a step nearer to a judgment day. Oh! that they were wise, that they would consider this, that they would mind their latter end.

Let me conclude this discourse, my friends, by exhorting you to make due preparation for this awful day. It is Christ's own advice. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man will come." The certainty of the judgment with the uncertainty of the time, should engage us to watch and to pray and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord, to make our calling and election sure, and to be found of Christ without spot and blameless. If that day which comes as a thief in the night should come in our day, are we

ready for it? Are we in a state of habitual—are we in a state of actual—preparation? We may ascertain this by our readiness to die. None are ready for a judgment day but those who are ready for a death day. If our sins lie down with us in the grave, they will rise with us and appear against us in the judgment. In a word, be concerned from a consideration of judgment to come, to hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering. Hence says the Apostle to the Thessalonian church, 2d epistle, "Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Abound in the duties of religion—

Preparation for it consists in these two things: professing the doctrines and practicing the duties of Christianity—In holding the mystery of faith, in a pure conscience, holding it fast, holding it forth—

SERMON,

BY THE REV. THOMAS HAMILTON.

Preached in Philadelphia, July, 1815.

"Who is on the Lord's side?" (Exodus xxxii. 26.)

Both the political and the religious world are divided into a great many sects. Each is zealous to enlarge and extend its own power and interest. Opposing banners are displayed and strenuous exertions are made to enlist persons to serve under them. But in this selfish struggle for superiority and pre-eminence, the glory of God, which should be the chief aim, is in a great measure overlooked and disregarded. Rallying around their own standard, they cry with Jehu—"Who is on my side? Who?" Whereas their language, with that of Moses, the servant of the Lord, should be—"Who is on the Lord's side?" Highly memorable and mournful was the occasion on which Moses uttered these words. The congregation of Israel had been guilty of a most foul and general departure from the Lord their God. During the absence of Moses on the mount, where he received from the immediate hand of God, the law written upon two tables of stone, they became impatient, and gathering themselves to Aaron they said—"Up, make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Accordingly they framed and worshipped a golden calf. When Moses was apprised of the heinous offence which they had committed, he descended from the mount, and proceeded to inflict on the most conspicuous transgressors, exemplary vengeance. Standing in the gate of the camp, he cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me." We are informed that, "All the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him, aud putting their sword by their side, at the commandment of the Lord, they

went in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slew every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor."

This whole transaction is recorded for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come. The *unbelief* and *depravity* which excited the children of Israel to idolatry, are not extinct. They exist, they operate, they reign in the minds of all natural men. They prompt persons to an idolatry more secret and refined, but not less criminal than the worship of the golden calf. Now, as well as formerly, to this assembly as well as to that of Israel, the Lord is saying, "Who is on the Lord's side?" He is not indeed calling his servants to be instruments of his vengeance on them who are his enemies, though they may be even gross idolaters and transgressors of his law, and rebels against his government. But he is calling them to distinguish themselves from others, and to show that they are on the Lord's side.

In the prosecution of this subject, we shall

I. Consider what is intended by the "Lord's side;"

II. What it is to be on his side; and

III. The seasons, when in a particular manner the Lord is calling on us to appear on his side.

I. We shall consider what is intended by the "Lord's side;" and it includes the following things:

1. The Lord has an *interest* in the world.

This is very important and diversified. He has indeed an universal interest. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. He is the Creator, and Preserver, and Governor of all things. His kingdom ruleth over all. But the interest of which we are speaking is confined to the church, his visible kingdom.

It is his *word*, including all the truths which it contains. These are very precious in his eyes. His glory is intimately concerned in their reception, preservation, and influence among men.

It is his *worship*, the religious homage to which he is entitled from all, and especially from his professed people, to whom the call is, "For he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." And the ordinances in which he is to be worshipped,—these we are required to receive, observe, keep pure and entire. The honor of his name is much concerned in the purity of his worship. A high offence is offered to him, when men either neglect his worship, or worship him in any way not appointed in his word.

It is his *law*. This comprehends all the precepts and rules

which are found in the word of God, and which are summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, which bear an impress of his authority, wisdom and holiness. They are holy, just and good, and the observance of them is universally required. God is glorified by obedience to his law, and dishonored by the violation of its precepts, either in heart, lips, or life.

It is his *people*, who are represented as his portion and inheritance. "The Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob is the rod of his inheritance," his treasure, his jewels, a crown of glory and a royal diadem in his hand. They are called his chosen people, the redeemed and ransomed of the Lord, his children, and above all, his spouse, in whom he takes great delight. "Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."

It is his *work*. The Lord has a work going on in the church on earth. With respect to this Habbakuk prays, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years." This work is two-fold, visible and invisible; commenced and carried on in the heart, and thence extending its influence into the actions of the life. "He that hath begun the good work, will carry it on unto the day of Jesus Christ." And as he has a private personal work, so he has a public ecclesiastical work. This work has for its object a pure and spiritual administration of the ordinances and laws of the house of God. It is subject to vicissitudes. Sometimes it has been low, at other times it has been eminently prosperous.

2. There is opposition made to the Lord's interest, which renders it his *cause*. A cause is the subject of litigation. He has had a cause ever since he has had an interest in the world; for his interest has always been opposed, resisted, and disputed. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed." (Gen. iii. 15.) In allusion to a court of judicature, where causes are considered and issued between man and man, the Lord is represented as producing witnesses in his behalf, against those who opposed his divine claims and prerogatives. "Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any." (Isa. xliv. 8.) "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord; and my servant whom I have chosen." (Isa. xliii. 10.) "Who will contend with me?" says Christ; "let us stand together; Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me." (Isa. l. 8.) The opposi-

tion which is made to the Lord's interest in the world springs from various sources. There are *diabolical* enemies. The fallen spirits who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, began to oppose the authority of God in Eden, in the seduction of our first parents from their allegiance to God. They have been unwearied ever since, in the most malignant and hostile attacks, to counteract the divine will and government. They have succeeded in drawing men into the practice of every kind of sin. The works of the devil are most extensive, complicated and mischievous. He has brought desolation and ruin into the world. There are *human* enemies of the government and glory of God. Under the influence of their father, the devil, the sons of men have erected the standard of rebellion. "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Multitudes of them worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. "Becoming vain in their imagination and their foolish heart being darkened, they have changed the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things." Of those who profess to be the worshippers of the true God, how many have corrupted his worship and his word? They have sought out inventions, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. How much error, and superstition, and will-worship prevail in churches called Christian, and even Reformed! How much opposition is made to the work of the Lord, both of sanctification and reformation! How is the holy and righteous law of God trampled under foot! Iniquity abounds; it comes in like a flood. How great the enmity which the men of the world discover against the humble followers of Christ. They are reproached, despised, and persecuted.

There are *things*, which are opposed to the interest of God in the world. Sin and the world are opposed to the glory, honor, and Government of God. Sin makes a malignant opposition to all the prerogatives and perfections of God. It tends to the subversion of the divine throne. It obscures the glory of his attributes, as displayed in the moral government of the world. It strikes against the existence of all of them. It is opposite to the unspotted holiness of God, which is the distinguishing glory of the Deity. It vilifies the wisdom of God, which prescribed the law to men, as the rule of their duty. It bids defiance to the power of God, which will be exercised in punishing sin. It is a high contempt and abuse of the divine goodness, which should constrain man to keep the law of God. It is an implicit denial of the omnis-

cience of God. This enemy to God not only exists in wicked men, prompting them to resist his authority and will, but in the hearts of them who have appeared on the Lord's side. Hence it should be guarded against by them, as an insidious and dangerous enemy.

The *world* is also opposed to the interest and cause of God. Hence the Apostle John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

3. The Lord has *adherents*, who espouse his cause in opposition to all his enemies. This is intimated in the phrase, "The Lord's side." There have been two classes of men in the world since the days of Cain and Abel, the righteous and the wicked; the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This leads us to inquire,

II. What it is to be on the "Lords' side." And,

1. They who are on the Lord's side are *united* to him in *heart*. Their adherence to him is cordial. With their heart they believe in him. (Rom. x. 10.) An unbelieving heart inclines persons to depart from the living God; a believing heart to close with him and cleave to him. Faith is an untiring grace. It draws the soul which is far from God, nigh to him. And as faith works by love, they who are on the Lord's side are devoted to him in the affection of their hearts. They love the Lord; they love the things of God, and the people of God. Their desire is to his name and the remembrance of him. They thirst for God, the living God. Their soul followeth hard after him. They indeed feel some disposition to turn away from the Lord, and side with his enemies, but this is not a predominant inclination. They mourn over and resist it.

2. They who are on the Lord's side, are not ashamed to make a confession of their faith and love. While with the heart they believe unto righteousness, with their tongue they make confession unto salvation. This is a necessary result. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." They speak *of* him—of his names, titles, attributes, words, works, and ways. They celebrate and commend these to one another. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." And to others—to conciliate their esteem and love and homage for him, whom their souls love. "This is my friend, and this is my beloved, O ye daughters of Jerusalem." They confess their faith in his word, their subjection

to his laws, and their devotion to his service and glory. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and shall surname himself by the name of Israel." They speak *for* the Lord. They justify the ways of God to men, who are sometimes not afraid to impeach and reproach them, as unequal and unjust. And the Lord gives them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries are unable to gainsay or resist. They bear testimony to his truths and ways. They witness a good confession. They are full, pointed, and explicit in their testimony.

3. They who are on the Lord's side act *for* him. Their adherence is practical. They live to him. By their fruits, as well as their words, you will know them to be on the Lord's side. They do the work of the Lord, keep his law, and observe his statutes and ordinances. They endeavor to advance his kingdom and glory in the world. It is their aim to glorify him in soul, in body, and in spirit.

4. They who are on the Lord's side, are willing to *suffer* for his cause and interest. All who espouse the cause of God and truth, may expect to suffer in some way or other. "If any man will be my disciple," says Christ, "let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus," says Paul, "shall suffer persecution." "Let none of you suffer," says Peter, "as an evil doer; yet if any man suffer as a christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." They, like Moses, count the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world. They are willing to be set at nought, to be despised, and to suffer shame for his name's sake. They are enabled to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. They have often endured bonds, imprisonments and death, for their adherence to the Lord's side. "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword," &c. (Heb. xi. 36, 37.) They who are on the Lord's side have *common friends* and *enemies* with him.

His friends are their friends. Their delight is in the saints, the excellent of the earth. As they love him that begat, so they love every one that is begotten of him. Fellowship with the saints, they esteem a comfort, a privilege, and an honor. His enemies are their enemies. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with them that

rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them my enemies." (Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22.)

5. They who are on the Lord's side are *anxious* for the success of his cause. They pray for it. They give the Lord no rest till he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. They use means to *gain* others over to the Lord's side. They entreat them to be reconciled to God, to renounce the fellowship of the works of darkness. They *rejoice* in the conversion of sinners from the error of their ways. They are *grieved* when any who professed to be on the Lord's side make defection from it. They use all proper means to reclaim them.

6. They who are on the Lord's side distinguish themselves by the *manner* in which they appear for him. Their adherence to the Lord's side is *open*. They are not disciples of the night, like Nicodemus. They walk in the light. They confess the name of God before many witnesses. They stand with Christ in a conspicuous place, even on Mount Zion. The name of God is written in their foreheads, and therefore obvious to all. They speak a language and act a part which show to what side they belong. Neutral and equivocal conduct is inadmissible. Indeed, they themselves scorn it. They are not ashamed of their cause or their Master.

Their adherence to the Lord's side is *uniform* and *constant*. "Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John viii. 31.) "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." (Hos. vi. 3.) "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul." (Heb. x. 38, 39.) Many in their professed adherence to the cause and interest of the Lord are as unstable as water. They waver. (Heb. x. 23.) Their heart is divided. (Hos. x. 2.) They are one day on the Lord's side; another on the side of the world, the devil, and their own lusts.

Their adherence is *universal*. They cleave to the *whole* cause and interest of the Lord; to all his truths, ordinances, and laws, as far as they are known to them. They follow the Lord fully; walk in all his ordinances and commandments; esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be right.

Their adherence is *upright* in respect of the *principle* from which they act. This is not a selfish, carnal, and mercenary one, like that of those mentioned, John vi. 26.—In respect of the *end* which they have in view, which is the glory of God, not any carnal and selfish object.—In respect of the

manner, cleaving to the Lord in the strength of his grace; living in faith on him.

This adherence is *zealous*, *affectionate* and *resolute*. They may sometimes feel and discover a degree of languor, and indifference, and irresolution. These are not characteristical of them. They are habitually distinguished from cold, carnal, and cautious professors, who are afraid of committing themselves in the service of God.

III. There are seasons when in a particular manner the Lord is calling us to appear on his side. The following are some of them:

1. When *few* appear on his side. Compared with the number of his enemies, the Lord's followers have been few. They are a little flock. There are times when they are fewer than ordinary; when the side of his enemies is numerous and powerful. Then there is a special call to appear in an open and decided manner on his side, in defence of his cause and interest.

2. When *defection* prevails among them who profess to be upon his side. In the time of the ministry of Christ on earth, many professed to be on his side, and attended on his sermons, and witnessed his miracles. Their motives, however, were not genuine. They adhered to him because they expected to derive some worldly advantage from him. In one of his discourses, they took offence at his doctrine, which did not accord with their preconceived notions. They went back and walked no more with him. Jesus turning to his disciples, said, "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John vi. 66–69.) When Israel apostatized in the worship of the golden calf, all the sons of Levi stood forth on the Lord's side. In the same manner the faithful followers of God acted under the reign of Antichrist, when all the world wondered after the beast. Though few and obscure, they bore testimony for Christ.

3. When those who profess to be on the side of the Lord discover a *lukewarm* and *wavering temper* as to his cause and interest. When they begin to temporize—this is an alarming symptom, and often proves the cause of actual defection from the Lord's side. The true adherents of Christ should not be indifferent to it, but should endeavor to excite their brethren to a consistent and active zeal in the cause of God. Thus acted *Joshua* towards Israel, "Choose you this day whom you will serve," &c. Thus acted *Elijah* toward the same people at Mount Carmel: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Thus *Paul* towards Peter, when he withstood him

to the face, and blamed him for his dissimulation. (Gal. ii.) Christ condemns this spirit of indifference in the Church of Ephesus, who had fallen from her first love. (Rev. ii.) And in the Church of Laodicia. (Rev. iii.) How much of this appears now! and how few are there, who, by their example and conversation, endeavor to check it.

4. When the Lord's side is in great *reproach* and *contempt.* Sometimes it has been in repute ; it has enjoyed the favor of the great, and many outward advantages. Then many accede to it, and none make defection from it. But often it is in circumstances the reverse of these. This was the case in the days of Nehemiah. The remnant of the captivity was in great affliction and reproach. When they began to re-establish themselves in Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple, and restore the worship of God, Sanballat and Tobiah derided them. "What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in one day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? Even that which they build, if a fox go up he shall even break down their stone wall." (Neh. iv. 2, 3.) Then the Lord had some on his side, who were not afraid nor ashamed to espouse his cause and interest, though much opposed, oppressed, and despised. Nehemiah preferred the interest of Zion above his chief joy. He was deeply affected by her depression. He wept and mourned and fasted and prayed to the God of heaven. He interceded with the Persian king to extend his patronage to her. He entered on the most perilous enterprizes in her behalf. His example is worthy of imitation.

5 When the Lord's side is exposed to *ravages* and *persecution.* A time of peace multiplies professed adherents to the cause of God. He sends persecution to try their integrity. Many do not stand the test. All who are upright in their profession are disposed and enabled to suffer rather than sin. They remain faithful unto death, resisting even unto blood, striving against sin.

[The above discourse has no written application: and in several places there are marks which indicate that what occurs under various particulars, was merely the introduction or outline of what was intended. Nothing, however, has been added, nor is there any correction of the language, except when there are such omissions or mistakes as naturally

occur in the haste of writing. It would have been desirable that the discourse had been more full, but even in its imperfect state, it can do no discredit to the dead, and by the divine blessing, may do much good to the living.—*Editor.*]

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. JOSEPH SHAW, L. L. D.

The subject of the following memoir was born at Rattray, Perthshire, Scotland, and baptized, December 6, 1778. He gave evidence of early piety. The early part of his life was spent in preparing himself for the arduous and highly responsible duties of an "Ambassador of Christ." He was educated at Edinburgh, and finished his collegiate course with credit and reputation. He prosecuted the study of Divinity under the Rev. Professor Bruce; and having spent the usual time, was commissioned to preach the everlasting gospel. Soon after this, a request was made by the Associate congregation of Philadelphia, to the General Associate Synod of Scotland, to appoint one to labor among them in word and doctrine. Mr. Shaw was selected and appointed to this work. In the fall of 1805, he arrived in this country, and after a fair hearing, the congregation called him to be their fixed pastor. In this situation he continued until the year 1810, when, for reasons which he deemed sufficient, he gave in the demission of his charge of the congregation.

He was afterwards called to the professorship of languages in Dickinson College, Carlisle, where he continued till the operations of that institution ceased. In 1815, he received a similar call to the Academy of Albany, New-York. Here he taught with reputation and success. His labors as a minister were occasionally, and for a time, almost statedly enjoyed by the congregation in Fox-street, and he was the principal instrument in bringing that congregation into connection with the Associate Church. Those who were educated under him, always spoke of him with gratitude and affection, and regarded him as a father and friend. He was elected a mem-

ber of many literary societies, and received the title of Doctor of Laws from Union College.

At the commencement of the vacation in August, 1824, he left Albany for Philadelphia. Being exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and not being apprehensive of any danger, he was seized with a violent cold. On Sabbath he was engaged to preach; on the morning of that day he rose, having spent a sleepless night. The cause of his restlessness was a soreness of the tongue, which, upon examination, was found to be much inflamed and excoriated. Though this was a symptom of the fever which succeeded, he was unwilling that the people who had invited his services should be disappointed, and therefore ventured, though attended with much pain, to preach the discourse which follows.

On Monday, the fever set in, and continued till Thursday, when it abated, and on Friday seemed to have left him. His physician and attendants had not the slightest suspicion that he was dangerous; towards morning, he was visibly worse—and before ten o'clock, the spirit had left its clay tenement. His death was attributed to inflammation in the stomach.

In his death, society lost a valuable member, the church an able defender, and that portion of it to which he was attached, a firm and undeviating friend; as he was sincerely and zealously attached to the principles of the Reformation, as maintained by the Associate Synod of North America.

Being naturally of a contemplative and taciturn disposition, his first impressions on a stranger were not prepossessing, it was only those who were in habits of intimacy with him that knew and duly prized his private worth. But, though he was naturally contemplative, he was not so to the breach of decorum. On the contrary, few men had a better knowledge of men and manners. His conversation generally led to subjects of a heavenly and divine nature, and few had a happier turn in directing it to subjects of this kind. His composition was dignified and smooth, and he evidently labored more for perspicuity than embellishment. He always gave due time for preparation for public duties, and never attempted to serve the Lord "with that which cost him nothing." His discourses were written in full, and delivered nearly as they were written. He was not backward in administering reproof, when he saw it to be necessary; and with prudence and discretion, peculiar to himself, he discountenanced that disposition which prevails with some, to levity, and to trifling with serious things. He was possessed of great equanimity

of mind, which, sanctified by the Spirit of God, was of great advantage to him in the troubles and afflictions he was called to endure.

The sermon which follows, if not the best of his compositions, is at least good; it was selected as being his last—which will give it interest. It was not prepared for the press by the author, and it is probable he had not the most distant idea of giving it to the public. It is given, however, just as he left it, and is a convincing proof of the care and diligence with which he prepared for public services.

His earthly sufferings terminated in the congregation in which he was first settled. His remains were deposited in front of the Associate Church, beside those of Mr. Marshall, his venerable predecessor.

The following inscription is on his tomb-stone:

In Memory of

THE REV. JOSEPH SHAW, L. L. D.,

A Native of Scotland;

LATE PROFESSOR OF LANGUAGES IN THE ALBANY ACADEMY, NEW-YORK,

AND FORMERLY PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH,

Who Died August 21st, 1824,

In the 46th year of his age, and Twenty-Third of his Ministry.

His last sermon he preached to this congregation on the Sabbath immediately preceding his decease, from the words, 'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man.' Prov. viii. 4.

SERMON,

BY THE REV. JOSEPH SHAW, L. L. D.

"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." (Prov. viii. 4.)

We need not, my brethren, bring into contrast different nations and ages—we need not compare together the savage, the semi-barbarous and the civilized races of men—we need not visit even in imagination all the inhabitants of the globe existing under all the varieties of climate, from the polar regions of the north to the torrid zone—we need not oppose the rude and gloomy inhabitants of the cave, the forest, and snow-built hut, to the refined society of splendid courts and cities—we need not compare christian with heathen, or the untutored peasant with the well educated man, in order to discover that man is not the same every where, at all times and in all respects, in regard to the state of his mind, any more, than in regard to his bodily habits and external circumstances. No: take the case of but one man, compare that man with himself, and in the few years which constitute his natural life, you will see how in all its succeeding stages, he is constantly differing from his former self. The same individual in his boyhood, in the strength of manhood, and in the decrepitude of old age, differs not more in vigor and appearance from himself, than do his taste, opinions and emotions of mind in the different stages of his being. As an historical illustration of this point, we call you to observe—what must be obvious to every one, on the bare mention of it—that the author of the three sacred books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, must have been in three very different states of mind, when he penned them. The most striking diversities indeed are apparent in these three divine compositions. The Song is a sublime allegory, setting forth in all the glow and sprightliness of a youthful mind, the intimate connection between God and the church. The book of Proverbs, fraught with the choicest rules of conduct in all

our relations to God and man, is evidently, the production of one who had arrived at the full ripeness of his faculties, lived much among men, and was a close observer of human life and manners. The book of Ecclesiastes is evidently the writing of a man, who with much dear-bought experience of the insufficiency of all earthly good for happiness, has gone down into the vale of years, and weary of the bustle and business of the world, pronounces the result of all his researches in these affecting words, "vanity of vanities: all is vanity." From internal evidence, therefore, *i. e.* from the subject matter, the language, the style and the manner of writing, we concur with those Jewish writers who affirm, that Solomon wrote the Canticles in his youth, the Proverbs in his riper years, and Ecclesiastes in his old age.

Solomon, the penman of these three books, was eminently favored with the illuminating inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and even twice witnessed the Divine presence. Under the guidance of the Divine Spirit his pen has recorded, for the benefit of all future generations, this noble passage in the beginning of the eighth chapter of the book of Proverbs, in which Jehovah-Jesus, the personal wisdom of God, loudly and importunately calls all within hearing of the gospel to seek the true knowledge of the divine will and the fear of the Lord, which is the height and perfection of true wisdom. I am aware that some consider this passage as one of those beautiful descriptions and personifications which abound in, and embellish the sacred writings. But the church of God has in all ages considered the terms, WORD and WISDOM, as proper names of the second person of the Trinity. Besides, if we look into the passage itself, we will find much of it that, even with violent pushing beyond all sober interpretation, will hardly admit of any good sense or of any sense at all, if wisdom here mean only the attribute or quality of wisdom. But if we interpret wisdom here of a real person, as I think upon the principles of fair interpretation we must, every part will with great truth and beauty apply to the Lord Jesus Christ; in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and to whom the church from the beginning till now is indebted for all gracious manifestations. After all, if any should consider the passage as a very lively personification in the manner of the orientals, it is still the voice of the Almighty Father of the universe, calling us to listen to the revelations of eternal wisdom and mercy; to "Him who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption;" it is still an authentic gospel offer of Christ

to all to accept him, made by God to us: according to the apostle John, "my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

You see then what is to be the subject matter of our discourse, namely, what, in the language of orthodox divines, is termed the *gospel call.* But as the call of Wisdom in our text is expressed in universal terms, and no kind or degree of limitation; we may warrantably extend it to every method whereby Jehovah communicates the knowledge of his being, perfections and will to men.

1. And in the first place he speaks to us by all his works—above and around us, all nature cries aloud. The ninteenth Psalm, besides a beautiful eulogy on the law of God, is a psalm of praise to the Creator; founded on the consideration of his glory which is so conspicuous in the creationi—n the heavens and in the stars. The Great Being preaches day and night to man by all the things which his hands have made. His works are obvious to every eye, and his voice in them audible to every ear, in all parts of his dominions. Day transmits to night and night again to day, the task of shewing the knowledge of God and uttering his praises. And as they have hitherto done, so they will never cease to do, as long as the sun and moon endure and the vicissitudes of day and night return. Above all, the glorious sun, issuing forth morning after morning, like the sovereign of the skies; diffusing light and warmth, and brilliant coloring over every object beneath; naturally leads our eye upward to himself, and still higher—to that Being by whom the sun, the most magnificent object in all nature, was made. The sweet singer of Israel, the man after God's own heart, turned to good spiritual account, the magnificent nocturnal spectacle of the shining stars and the moon walking in brightness. How beyond all expression wonderful, that the maker of all these things should be "mindful of man!" Ever since the creation there has been a clear continued manifestation of the invisible essence and perfections of Jehovah in the works of nature. The spoken and written languages of men are numerous, and intelligible but to few except the inhabitants of particular countries; but the works of God deliver in a language common to all, instructions audible, visible and intelligible to men of every tongue under heaven. Nature's preaching is the most ancient and universal, her voice is really God's voice; as really so as the written or preached gospel is. Not, that nature's silent voice reveals the only hope of guilty man—but she preaches the true God clearly and intelligibly, so far as to leave all the Gentile

nations without excuse for their idolatry and other crimes. Let us then yield our eyes, our ears and our hearts to God's voice in his wonderful works.

2. In the next place the *voice of conscience* within all men, is as really God's voice and call in man, as his call in the word without him. It is a matter of experience with all men, a general fact which even the boldest sceptic and the most profligate of human beings will and must admit, because they know and feel it, that we naturally approve of all actions of a certain kind and disapprove of all opposite actions, as soon as we hear of the action and its circumstances, and without waiting the result of any process of reasoning. A moral faculty or power, therefore, or whatever you please to call it, which instantaneously makes a difference between right and wrong, virtue and vice, must be admitted to be a part of our mental constitution, belonging not to a few, but to all mankind. In this native moral feeling originate the laws of society which condemn crime and ordain the punishment; and silent and unseen as this moral power within us is, it is a mightier check on thousands of actions which human laws cannot reach, and a more terrible avenger, than ten thousand punishments ordained by men. In the mental anguish of the guilty, in the agitations and terrors of conscience at the thoughts of the Deity and of futurity, we may and we ought to hear God's voice, saying to us, "Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God." (Jer. ii. 19. Gal. iii. 10.) On the other hand, God's voice approving of moral righteousness and truth may be heard in the approbation, the tranquillity and the delights of a good conscience.

What we mean by these remarks, an inspired apostle has summed up in two verses, Rom. ii. 14, 15,—which natural conscience, so far as it goes in discovering men's duty and condemning sin, is in harmony with the will of God contained in the holy scriptures, and ought to be listened to as God's very voice to man. But conscience is often evil, weakened, depraved, deluded, stupified by sin, "seared as with a hot iron." Conscience is not the supreme rule of duty, and we should study to have it well informed, quick to perceive duty, purged from dead works by the blood of Christ, that we may in safety listen to its announcements as the voice of God.

3. Farther: God calls to all men by the voice of Providence. During the long period in which God left all nations to walk in their own ways, he always presented himself to them in his works of creation and providence, as the only

Creator, as their gracious Preserver. "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (Acts xiv. 17.) God's acts of providence consist in "preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions." In his works of preservation and government, he evidently conducts himself upon the principles of goodness, long-suffering, patience and forbearance; and such kind, benevolent procedure, calls for and leads to repentance. Sometimes he appears in the character of a God of judgment coming out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; to them "the Lord's voice crieth unto the city; hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it." "The Highest gave his voice, hailstones and coals of fire." The Lord is "known by the judgments which he executeth." What were the plagues on Pharaoh but the voice of God calling louder and louder to the tyrant to let Israel go? What were God's judgments threatened against his ancient people, but so many voices urging them to hearken unto him? The hundred and seventh psalm finely sets forth what emotions of joy and gratitude should arise from mercies and deliverances: the elements of nature are providential agents in the hand of the Almighty whereby he utters his voice to man, and accomplishes his purposes upon him. He whispers to us in the gentle breeze, in the stillness of the summer sky and in the softness of moonshine. He lifts up his voice and cries aloud in the thunder of the clouds, in the howling and dashing of the storm, in the roaring of the boundless world of waters, in the lightning rending and shaking the forest, piercing and melting the rocks, and in all the dreadful sublimity of the magnificent operations of the material elements. "Hear attentively the noise of his voice and the sound that goeth out of his mouth." "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty."

If we descend to the littleness of personal concerns, the voice of Providence is in these also distinctly uttered. It is the delight of the good man, to think that God cares for him and his; and to hear the voice of his own God, whether in dispensations of prosperity or adversity. But Providence speaks to every one by every event in their lot, whether we disown the voice or not. Are we in prosperity? Wisdom's cry to us is, "Trust not in uncertain riches—be ready to distribute, willing to communicate." Are riches apt to "make to themselves wings and fly away?" Wisdom cries, "Do

good while it is in the power of your hands." Is poverty or affliction our lot? Wisdom's cry is, "All things are of God—be patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Is a brother or sister naked and destitute of daily food? Wisdom crieth to us, "Give them all things that are needful for the body." There is the voice of dying relatives and friends—for by their deaths God calls to the survivors, "Be ye also ready." In short, the Providence of God, whether we view it on a grand scale as directed to the support of worlds and of nations, or as embracing in its care families and single persons, is always directed on this great principle and for this high end—the promotion of righteousness: and therefore in every dispensation, we should "regard the work of the Lord and consider the operation of his hands," that we may learn meekness, and righteousness and judgment.

4. Again: God calls to us by the common operations of his Spirit. That there is a work of the Spirit upon the minds of men which does not issue in a saving change, is implied in much of the language of scripture, both in the Old and New Testament. There we read of provoking, rebelling against and grieving God's Holy Spirit. The protomartyr Stephen speaks of a stiff-necked resistance to the Holy Ghost. Ananias and his wife "tempted the Spirit of the Lord." We read of doing despite "to the Spirit of grace," and of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; and the Spirit is introduced as directly himself calling to us.

What is the plain import of all this language? Does it not signify that the Spirit is one against whom we commit sin, when we resist or despise the voice of the gospel? It clearly signifies that notwithstanding his gracious and kindly operations, he is desperately, resolutely, malignantly resisted by many of the subjects of these operations; which he could never be, except upon the supposition of his first calling upon us, operating in us, addressing himself to us, dealing closely with our consciences for conviction and repentance. If he did not first call us to entertain him by faith, reverence and love, we would be guilty of no disobedience to him, or of no contempt either of his person or office. It is clear then there are operations of the Spirit, which are not of a saving character. Let us then obey his voice and beware of quenching him, lest he strive no more with us.

Lastly. The voice of the gospel is the voice of the Eternal and Personal Wisdom of God to all within the hearing of it, without reserve or exception of age, sex, or condition. This I take to be the great subject matter of the first four verses of

this chapter. Listen as for your lives, while I recite to you in God's own words a few of the calls which God addresses to you and me, to all who are here this day, and to all who every where hear the sound of the gospel: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price," &c. (Isa. lv. 1–7.) The sure mercies of David are applied, (Acts xiii. 34,) to the great blessings of Messiah's kingdom, freely promised of old, and confirmed by oath—which application of Isaiah's words prove them clearly to be a gospel call. Similar was the call from the Saviour's own lips, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The preaching of the gospel is represented in the twenty-second chapter of Matthew by the parable of the marriage feast, and again in the fourteenth chapter of Luke under the notion of a great supper. Every one must feel a charm in these figurative modes of conveying to us the invitations of the gospel. Hear now Paul's own account of the manner in which the apostles executed their gracious commission: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," &c. (2 Cor. v. 18—21.) They were commissioned to testify and declare the great doctrine of reconciliation to God by the death of Christ; and then to urge sinners to be actually reconciled—to press home upon them the doctrine of reconciliation, as a grand motive to return unto God. But the fact being certain and manifest that God does call men by the gospel, we shall now proceed to make some observations explanatory of the great subject usually styled the gospel call.

ON THE GOSPEL CALL.

1. The call of the gospel is directed to *men*, not to angels. Whether, within the wide universe there are other worlds and systems of worlds inhabited by races of beings peculiar to them, we know not; but this we know, that God made man, gave him a very glorious nature, planted him on the earth, and to this creature, man, he speaks in the text, and to him only, and to him emphatically: "Unto you, O *men*, I call." There is indeed another order of intelligent beings to whom man is a little and but a little inferior. But O, the amazing, the distinguishing, sovereign mercy of God! The inferior creature, though self-destroyed, is called to return and live, whilst the more glorious of the two, once fallen, is doomed to the loss

of all happiness and all hope. "Christ took not on him the nature of angels," but our nature—"The Word was made flesh"—"He was found in fashion as a man"—"Christ is made of God," not to angels, but 'unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption"—"Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" If man, thus distinguished above angels, hear not when God calls, he shall be tormented in the bottomless pit, with the heart-rending remorse which even devils can not feel.

2. The call of the gospel is directed to men in their character of *sinners*. Who, in his reason, would call to return to the paths of obedience, those who had never strayed from them? It were surely a mad project to set out in search of what is not lost—to insist upon rescuing those who are in perfect safety—to compel those to come in who had never left their Father's house—to urge innocent men to accept of pardon for offences never committed—the happy man, who never knew what the cry of misery was, to listen to the voice of mercy—and the well clothed and well fed, like beggars, hungry and naked, to accept of food and clothing, without money and without price. No mind could bear, for a moment, the utterance of proposals so palpably contrary to reason and all the ordinary principles of human conduct.

But, on the contrary hand, any one can readily perceive the fitness of calling *sinners* to repentance—of seeking the recovery of what is *lost*—of crying aloud to the man who is in danger, to avoid it—of snatching the drowning man from death:—the moral beauty of commisseration awakening at the cry of misery—the suitableness of a gracious pardon to the case of the condemned rebel—of medicine to the sick—of food to the hungry—of clothing to the naked—of life to the dying—and of all these blessings being given freely to the poor and needy, who have nothing to pay.

Now, what is the fact in this case? Turn to the words of invitation and of calling. How readest thou? Opening the Bible, I find the poor, the wicked, the unrighteous, the unbelieving, the ungodly, the weary and heavy laden, the dead in trespasses and sins, enemies, rebels, apostates from Jehovah, marked as the very persons to whom the gospel is preached, and whom it calls to the hope and enjoyment of long lost happiness. I find this was our Saviour's practice, and his authority is supreme in his own special kingdom. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He announced this as the very end of

his coming into the world. "Jesus saith unto them; they that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mat. xi. 28, 29. Mark ii. 7.) I find his Forerunner the Baptist did likewise: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come." After the resurrection, I find the apostle Peter, in similar strains, exhorting the Jews: "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, for the promise is to you and to your children." Even the crucifiers of the Lord Jesus, he exhorts to "repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out:"—and Simon Magus, a man "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." Paul preached to the Ephesians, both Jews and Greeks, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ:"—and to the idolatrous Athenians, he preached, saying, "God now commandeth all men every where to repent." In short, there is no denying that the calls and invitations of the gospel are directed to men in the state of enmity and unbelief, in the character of sinners, the character which cleaves closest unto us all—and in our character of base, polluted, selfish beings; of hopeless, helpless, and godless sinners, does Eternal Wisdom cry unto us, "O ye simple, understand wisdom; and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart."

3. The call of the gospel is, in much solemnity and publicity, directed equally to all within hearing, without any exceptions or preferences on any account whatever. It is manifest, we think, on the very face of the beautiful passage before us, that Wisdom's call is loud, general, and awfully serious, excepting none and preferring none before others. Our former observations were meant to mark the character in which we are called. We now mean to show that every one in this character is called in the same degree with another—with the most earnest impartiality. Wisdom holds the same language to all within hearing of her voice; and this makes the duty of all, one and the same—namely, to obey her, by believing the gospel. Exactly parallel to this, is that other beautiful passage in the beginning of the ninth chapter. Ministers of the gospel are there called Wisdom's maidens, by whose mouth she sends abroad her invitations, crying in a public and audible manner, as if from an eminence, in the sight and hearing of all. In two of our Lord's parables the same fact, of the loud and general invitations of the gospel addressed to all without any note of distinction, is set forth metaphorically under the notion of a great man, of opulent

fortune and generous disposition, inviting persons of all ranks, characters, and conditions, to a magnificent feast on the occasion of his son's marriage. In these parables, the gospel is represented as first preached to the Jews by whom it is rejected, and after this, as preached to the Gentiles without distinction of persons. The analogy is striking between this invitation to a great feast, and the invitations of the gospel to receive Christ and his benefits. There is a great charm in the very words of the invitation, which we shall therefore recite; "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the high-ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." (Luke xiv. 21—23. Matt. xxi. 9, 10.) The gospel minister's commission, from our Saviour's own lips, runs in these unrestricted terms: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This is surely a warrant not to be disputed—to go every where offering salvation to men of every nation, kindred, language and condition. The outward condition of men is very various, but the call of the gospel is not regulated by a regard to such differences. You may be prospering in the world, or pining in indigence —you may be in health or in sickness—you may be a hoary headed sinner, or a youth just springing into life—you may be a parent or a child—you may be under a parent's roof and protection, or fatherless and motherless, cast upon the mercy of an unfeeling world—you may be earning your bread by the sweat of the brow or living at ease in the midst of fullness—you may be black or you may be white—but notwithstanding this variety of condition, you are one and all fit objects of the gospel call; because the character of *sinners*, in which the gospel addresses you, belongs to you all. Thus the great and mighty of the earth are called. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings." "Unto the poor, the gospel is preached." You may be rich, but the gift of God can not be purchased with money; you may be poor, but poverty gives no claim of merit on God.

As to intellectual and moral character, an equal variety is to be found. You may be men of genius, knowledge, learning and refinement, or the reverse—you may be close hypocrites, or open transgressors—you may be professors or profane—you may have long trodden the paths of iniquity, or you may be just entering into the paths of the wicked—you may be

liberal or churlish—you may be grave or gay, amiable or brutal in your tempers—your sins may be few or many, your degrees of guilt and demerit vastly different; but neither the one nor the other of all these alternatives at all restricts the call of the gospel. The favorable side gives you no preference; the unfavorable causes no exclusion—and for the plain reason that I have already repeatedly assigned, that God speaks to us in his gospel, as sinners ready to perish, which we all are, and as sinners needing salvation, which we all do. The differences as to condition and moral character, above mentioned, affect not our standing in the sight of God, as sinners. This is the common, the universal character of our race—for, differ as we may in other respects, this character remains in us, cleaves close unto us ever since the fall; in this as natural men we all agree, that we are the sinful sons and daughters of sinful Adam, guilty and undone, with nothing to pay and nothing to plead, not the least personal worthiness, not a single grain of merit to recommend us to the Saviour; in short, nothing to bring but sin and misery. Clearly, therefore, nothing remains for us but that each as a sinner, with an empty hand like a beggar, receive the purchased and finished salvation; which is altogether gratuitous, and which infinite mercy freely offers. And, blessed be the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, if we have no merit to recommend us, and none required, so no unworthiness cleaving to us is any bar in the way of the Saviour. Say not, my sins are too many, too great, too inveterate to be forgiven,—this is the language of pride and unbelief, which it is the very object of the free offers of the Saviour to silence and overcome. If, O sinner, all the crimes of bloody Manasseh, the blasphemies and persecutions of Saul of Tarsus, and the pollutions of Mary Magdalene, met in thy single person, yet all these accumulated, these mountainous transgressions, would be no more to the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, than a drop to the ocean—All thy debts to God's law and justice not so much to the unsearchable riches of Christ, as a single mite to the treasures of the world. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." To thee, yes to thee, O sinner, this good news is brought. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich," &c. O come then at Christ's invitation—all things are ready. At the foot of the cross no sinner ever perished; from the temple of mercy no beggar was ever sent empty away.

4. The gospel call is the immediate voice of Jehovah himself. "I call—my voice," yes, "the mouth of the Lord hath

spoken it." Though Wisdom send forth her maidens, still this voice is Wisdom's own voice. She speaks by their mouth: "She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city." This call is a divine summons to you—it is from the very highest authority—it "comes forth from the Lord Most High." It is God's command by way of eminence: "This is his command that we should believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." In this call of authority, God demands and solicits cordial and prompt submission to his voice. An act of refusal on our part is to set at defiance the authority of heaven, and is at the peril of our souls. A call to believe and repent could not have been given to Adam in innocence. Such a call supposes the previous entrance of sin, and is founded on the dispensation of grace, revealed in the gospel. But all commands in their own nature belong to the law, which, as given to Adam, bound him and his posterity to believe whatever God should reveal, and obey whatever he should command. The gospel, taken in a large sense, may comprehend all revelation, precepts as well as promises. But in order to guard against the very dangerous and very current Arminian doctrine, of the gospel being a new law, commanding faith and repentance and new obedience, as the federal conditions of life, it is necessary to be more exact in the use of terms, and to confine law and gospel each to their own proper sphere. The gospel then, strictly taken, contains no precepts nor threatenings, but is simply a promise, a message of glad tidings, of a Saviour to lost sinners of Adam's family.

The moment this new and glorious object, namely, a Saviour, was revealed, the law bound man to the corresponding duties or exercises of faith and repentance. Consider then that while you hear the voice of mercy in the gospel, you hear the voice of authority also, which the law makes it death to disobey. "Beware of him," saith God, of the promised Messiah, "and obey his voice for my name is in him." But instead of being terrified by the majesty of God's voice, it should be a very special encouragement to attend, when the Most High condescends to invite and solicit you, as he does, Isa. i. 18, "Come now and let us reason together." From this declaration might we not thus reason with our own souls? Be my sins ever so many and aggravated, too heavy for *me* to bear, yet Jehovah, against whom I have sinned, runs to meet me with Christ, with open arms to embrace me, with sealed pardon to set my heart at ease, with atoning blood to cleanse me from all my sin. Should my case be

worse than I can conceive or express—should Satan and my own heart suggest ten thousand objections to keep me away from the Saviour, yet "thus saith the Lord" shall weigh down all objections. At thy bidding, O Lord, I come trusting thy glorious promise: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out"—"God speaks, be silent and attend, the word of the Lord is sure"—"Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins"—"I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

5. In the call of the gospel, every hearer has *God's own warrant* for the self application of Christ, and all his benefits. To what does He so solemnly and loudly call us in the text? Is it not primarily and chiefly to take Christ, as freely offered in the gospel, for our own salvation in particular? A warrant is a law term, and denotes a writ conferring some right, or giving an officer of justice the power of caption, i.e. of taking a person. In correspondence with this, we have God's own word or warrant, conferring on us a perfect right to take Christ, and with him all blessings, freely as our own. We have already heard that God speaks to us as sinners, saying, "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners;" and speaks to us indiscriminately as in these words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever," &c. We find that the Being who made us and knows our frame, addresses himself to us in every mode and form by which it is possible to reach and stir our souls: as by kind and hearty invitations, by loud and urgent entreaty, by sovereign command, appealing to our instinctive desires of self-preservation, and deep seated fears of destruction; and if all this be not a high and perfect warrant, it is impossible to conceive what can be such, giving us a right, sinners as we are, standing on the brink of destruction, to believe like the primitive christians, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we ourselves shall be saved.

Now if such be the warrant of God's own word, and such the right which the warrant gives to us to receive Christ, then the faith corresponding to the warrant of the divine word and of the right of an offered saviour, which that warrant creates, must be a self-applying grace; and indeed self-application is a distinguishing characteristic of that saving precious grace of faith.

We mean not to attempt any discussion of the acts of faith or of the mental operations of the believer. Perhaps we should succeed better, if we dwelt more on the true and

only and glorious object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we should believe—and on the thing to be believed. We may just observe, that true faith is a grace and free gift of God, purchased by Christ's precious blood and freely bestowed for his sake, and wrought in the sinner's heart by the Spirit of God, through the word as a mean, and in its actual exercise must correspond to, and cover as it were, the whole ground embraced in the call, offer, word or testimony of the gospel. If we believe not in the very object presented, the very thing that is required, in the very manner and for the very end exhibited in the divine word and offer, it is plain that whatever else we believe, we do not believe that which is required, and do not set to our seal, to the truth and veracity of God in what he testifies of Christ. It is of the utmost importance that we should know the nature, object and extent of the testimony which God gives of Christ, if we would know the faith corresponding to it. True faith implies a knowledge of the great facts of the gospel history, viz. the incarnation, obedience crucifixion, resurrection and intercession of Christ, together with the meaning and import of these facts, that is, the truths contained and embodied in them. Along with the facts, we have received the interpretation or meaning of them in the word of God, and the doctrine or import of the whole is thus shortly summed up: "God so loved the world," &c. The testimony of the gospel therefore is just a testimony of the good tidings of God's love, to us perishing sinners, through his own eternal Son humbling himself, living, dying, rising and reigning. Now faith is a believing of that record which God gave of his Son. "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son." (1 John v. 10, 11.) But what does this record imply and declare? It implies and asserts that we are, one and all, in a perishing condition. It was a view of this, our perishing situation, which called forth the exercise of the love of God. If there be no truth in this doctrine, there is no value in the deliverance which the gospel proclaims; and if we do not believe and feel that we are ourselves in this state of ruin, and deservedly condemned to eternal misery, the proclamation of deliverance will sound poorly in our ears, because we feel not our need of it. But if we see ourselves in a state of ruin and condemnation, and be affected with fear and concern, then the message of deliverance will indeed be tidings of great joy. Now the fact is, that the law does condemn us personally, and shut us up to wrath. It says to each of us, when it comes with power on the con-

science, "Thou art the man." The soul becomes a prey to terror. Will a general notion of Christ dying for sinners, support us under the distressing conviction of our own personal condemnation to misery? Can any thing else relieve, or cleanse, or ease our consciences; dispel the clouds of misery and apprehension; beam peace upon our hearts; or bring the sunshine of joy into our souls, than a self-applying faith, which, receiving or appropriating "Christ as made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," gives the soul wherewith to fortify it against the condemnation of the law, and the accusations of an awakened conscience?

Both our condemnation and our salvation are matters of personal and particular concern, and hence the conclusion is clear, that the faith in Christ, by whom we are freed from condemnation, and in whom we have redemption, is a faith of particular appropriation. Without this appropriation of Christ and his benefits, wherein would the precious faith of God's elect differ from that of hypocrites and devils?

But if the law points its curse at us as individuals, the first command of the law, in consequence of the glorious revelation of that most glorious object of faith, in the promise of the gospel, warrants, binds and obliges all to whom the promise is revealed, to believe it with self-application, to "know and acknowledge" the God of revelation "to be the only true God, and our God and Redeemer."

Again; does the record contain an absolutely free grant of Jesus Christ, God's Son, to every gospel hearer individually and personally, as the only and all sufficient Saviour of perishing sinners? What, in the name of common sense, can be a suitable response to the grant made to me, but the language of a self-applying faith, "surely in the Lord Jesus have I righteousness and strength?"

The doctrine of the offer of free salvation through Christ may be considered as the sum of the gospel, which it is the great object of every part of the gospel to proclaim and illustrate and enforce. A free salvation, thus tendered to every one in particular, we can not possess but by a believing appropriation, and this personal appropriation can not be better described than by the scripture expressions of "taking, receiving, laying hold on," &c.

On this subject, it is an important fact never to be lost sight of, that God in his word speaks to you individually, as truly as if your names were set down. Thus, in all the precepts of the law, he uses the singular number, in which only one is

spoken of: "O Israel, thou hast," &c. (Rom. x. 8, 9. Isa. xliii. 25.) Now, if the gift and grant is thus to all and to each, must not the faith which answers to this grant, express itself to the following purpose? "I am such a sinner as those to whom the absolutely free gift and promise is addressed; to me personally, equally with others, the Saviour is given in the promise—I have the warrant of God's word, therefore, to receive what is offered. Faithful is the Promiser; I set to my seal that God is true; I accept the gift: I rest in the promise, as with Christ yea and amen, belonging to me and sure of being accomplished." Believing the promise directed to me, must surely consist in believing its accomplishment to myself in particular. If a king, by proclamation, offer a free pardon to a rebellious Province, must not every rebel believe the pardon of his own crime or be guilty of the additional crime of despising the royal mercy? No rebel can justly except himself, if he is not excepted, and no rebel can receive the benefit but by self-application. It is not enough if you can reason orthodoxly and logically upon the doctrines of the gospel. You must understand and believe it, with application to your own souls, if you would be saved by it. To believe in the possibility of salvation in any other course, though you may be very honest and sincere in your belief, is to believe your own imagination, and not the gospel. Your honesty and sincerity will not convert error into truth—cannot make that good news which is not good news —cannot change the will and plan of God. Immediate, instantaneous self-application is the good old way, as it is the only way in which we may find rest to our souls.

Moreover, that faith which appropriates Christ, contains also another property in its very nature, namely, assurance, a firm persuasion of mind, as to the truth believed, and a certain expectation of the good promised, and presently embraced in the promise. Hence, in that beautiful passage of Paul, in the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, describing the glorious method of our approach to the gracious presence of God in Christ, we have these words: "Let us draw near—in full assurance of faith—for he is faithful that promised." No doubt that "full assurance of faith" respected, in the first instance, a full conviction, a firm persuasion, a full satisfaction of mind, concerning the reality, glory and efficacy of the priesthood of Christ, in opposition to many of the Hebrews, who were still wavering, dispirited, and unsettled in their minds about the glorious priestly office of the Redeemer. But then that full conviction, that firm persuasion, respected not

that point as an abstract, speculative opinion; but it was a full satisfaciion of mind and conscience, in the real practical efficacy of Christ's priesthood, to give a sinner acceptance with God, to the utter exclusion of every other way and mean of acceptance.

But, faith here respects not merely the doctrine believed as to the efficacy of Christ's priestly office, but the grace of faith itself, which we actually exercise in our approaches to God; and which, resting on the person and office of Christ, the believer is required to exercise, even to the height of full assurance. As to his own acceptance in his approaches, the same faith which he exercises in the all-sufficiency of Christ and his atonement, and which impels him to the performance of holy duties, is required—a firm persuasion, that if he perform those duties aright, God will accept them. All drawing nigh to God acceptably, is by faith, in which there is not only such a thing as assurance, but a full assurance, if words have any meaning. There could be no degrees of a thing which had no existence. Along with a full conviction, therefore, of the efficacy of Christ's priesthood, there is included in this expression, "full assurance of faith," an assured trust of our acceptance with God, an acquiescence of soul in Christ as our Hope and Refuge.

Without viewing God as our own Covenant God, in Christ, —without a particular application of Christ's righteousness to our persons, and of his peace-speaking blood to our consciences—what joy, or hope, or consolation could we have, in drawing nigh to God in any duty? "He is faithful that hath promised," presents the best of all possible sureties to rest upon. Faith built on the blood of Christ, as exhibited in the promise and offer of the gospel, is no presumption nor enthusiasm. God gives all promises to us in Christ Jesus. Faith looks to the veracity of God, and looks to that which is the best ground of the fullest assurance: for the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent. The divine faithfulness is bound to the fulfillment of the divine word, to every believer of it. To him that believeth there shall be a performance: "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater." *Doubt* is a scriptural expression, for the state of the mind, which is opposite to faith. Now, a doubt means uncertainty of mind, the want of assurance; but faith, expressing the state of the mind the reverse of this, must mean a firm, unquestioning, assured confidence or persuasion.

Again; joy, peace, love, hope, victory over the world, newness of life, are the native fruits and effects of deliver-

ance from the natural state of condemnation and ruin. But all these are blessings contained in the promise, and which we come to enjoy, in the way of believing the promise. But could these blessed results, think you, ever arise in minds always doubting, disputing, hesitating? "Let not the wavering man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." (James i. 7.) Do not these effects, then, imply a firm persuasion and acquiescence of mind in the promise—a persuasion of personal reconciliation to God through Christ? It is no objection to all this, that believers aften labor under perplexing doubts and fears, and that they are not always assured of their own gracious state. These doubts have nothing to do with the nature of faith; they have a totally different origin—they arise from temptation, curruption, unbelief, or some unhappy bodily temperament.

Faith may be strong or weak, but still it is faith; just as a human being is still a human being, whether he be a weak or a strong man, an infant, or full grown; and an oak is an oak whether it be but a sapling, or have reared its head above all the trees of the forest. The nature of the principle of faith is not altered whether in a state of strength or weakness. That the believer often doubts is certain, and his doubts rise or fall, as faith is faint or vigorous. But it is not faith which doubts, but unbelief. That faith should doubt I conceive to be an absurdity, and impossibility. You might as well talk of an unbelieving faith or a believing unbelief, or say that two opposite things were the same thing. They are two great antagonist principles essentially different and opposite, like the scales of a balance, the one rising as the other falls, or like the two opposite extremities of a globe, at the greatest possible distance from each other. Hence, in the midst of spiritual conflict and desertion, the believer still claims God as his own God, and trusts in his mercy and faithfulness as a covenant keeping God.

Think not then, because assurance is of the essence of faith, that the believer must always, as a matter of course, be conscious, and have a sensible feeling of his personal interest in the Saviour. A full, constant assurance of that is a transcendent felicity, perhaps but a rare guest in the Christian bosom. A believer may so misjudge his own thoughts and actions, as not to be conscious of his profession of the gift of faith, and to dispute against the existence of what he really has. But what then? We are not conscious of the circulation of the blood from the heart to the extremeties, and back again to the heart: and yet this vital fluid is constantly flowing through

the arteries and veins of every living man. So may the vital principle of faith be working in the Christian, when he cannot distinguish or discover its operations, its presence or power. As to an actual sense and feeling of the interest in Christ, that is a quite different subject from the assurance of faith, of which we now speak. Faith looks without us, to Christ revealed in the world, and rests on the veracity of God pledged in his own testimony, respecting Christ. Sense looks inward, to the gracious working of the Spirit in the soul, to the marks and evidences of grace, to be discerned in the temper and conduct. These two species of assurance are not always conjoined. Faith may be directly cleaving to the Saviour, and claiming a covenant interest in him, while all light and comfort as to sensible experience are gone. "Zion said, *my* Lord hath forgotten me." Thus the fearer and servant of the Lord is described as destitute of sensible assurance, and yet is required to exercise the assurance of faith by "trusting in the Lord and staying upon his God." Upon the whole, then, you see that every one of you has God's own warrant, and, therefore, a perfect right to claim Christ as your own, in the exercise of an assured self applying faith; and this you can not withhold without foully reproaching the wisdom, goodness, truth and power of the Almighty Being who says to you, "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man."

6. This general call of the gospel is grounded on the all-sufficiency of the atonement. When we speak of the all-sufficiency of the atonement, we mean not to preach to you the scheme of universal redemption, as to purchase—a scheme which absurdly and impiously supposes, that the price of redemption from captivity and punishment was paid by the death of Christ, for many who will, in fact, never be redeemed.

But, rejecting this scheme, it remains a precious truth, that the work of Christ is a foundation of hope broad enough, and strong enough for the chief of sinners, and that the spiritual remedy of the gospel is adequate to the cure of the most desperate moral maladies of the whole world. Though Christ came not to die for every man purposely and intentionally—for if he did so, and a single individual were lost, the purpose of the Almighty is defeated—yet he came to fulfill, and did fulfill all righteousness, obeying the law and enduring the curse, not in part only and by halves, but satisfying its entire claims to the last mite. *Less* than this would not have ransomed a sinner—*more* could neither have been exacted nor rendered

for all the sinners of Adam's race. Few or many recipients of the redemption, make no difference in the value of the satisfaction rendered by the death of Christ. The number actually redeemed—regulated by reasons no doubt infinitely wise, but which being secret belong to the Lord—and "secret purposes of God," as to the application of redemption, affect not the demands of law and justice, nor the value of the satisfaction given them; and therefore the perfection of the atonement and righteousness of Christ, is an equally good ground of encouragement, for one sinner as for another, to receive the offered salvation.

To strengthen these remarks, we must add a very important fact, in this part of our discussion, viz. that Christ stands in the relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer, not to men of this or that race, or nation exclusively of others, but to mankind at large. He took on him the human nature: "The Word was made flesh." His name is Immanuel, God with us. This wonderful constitution of his Mediatorial Person places him in the relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer to all men in common—and so to all men in common, without any distinction of elect or reprobate, is he equally offered in the gospel. Once more, the blessed offices in which he is clothed, show him to be adapted and qualified as a Saviour, equally for one as for another. One man needs him as well as another, and therefore the preacher of the gospel, in executing his commission, must preach Christ to every creature, as having purchased all promised blessings as a Priest, as a Prophet giving the saving knowledge of them, and as actually communicating them in the exercise of his Kingly office. Upon the whole, all these considerations of his Mediatorial Person, his offices and atonement, enter into the idea of his all-sufficiency as a Saviour, to lay a foundation broad and strong enough for the unlimited call and offer of the gospel: "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man."

7. This outward call proves an effectual call only in those cases where the Spirit of God enters the heart along with it, "working in us both to will and to do, and the work of faith with power." Even when Christ spoke the word in person, the greater part of his hearers disobeyed the divine summons, and scorned his benevolent invitations. Many of you, I doubt not, can bear witness in your own persons, that the external call often falls powerless upon your ears, without penetrating the inner man; hence you go away from the house of God, the same men as you came, not subdued to the obedience of faith, not melted down into any tender, earnest, abiding con-

cern for your own souls or that of your families. And though your only hope of exchanging the darkness of hell for the light of heaven, is obedience to the authoritative call of the gospel, and acceptance of the authentic gospel offer, yet you refuse to be won by the alluring invitations, or persuaded by the terrors of the Lord. The most divine arguments and motives, taken immediately from the armory of heaven and from eternity, will not of themselves move or mollify the heart of enmity and of stone. The gift of Christ in the gospel, great and good, and worthy of God as it is, has no value or beauty to fascinate the carnal eye, or excite the desires of the carnal heart to possess it. But the word, in itself ineffectual, becomes a powerful weapon in the hand of the Spirit. When this Divine and Almighty Agent, whose office it is to take of the things which are Christ's and show them to our souls, works, there is success in the foulest and hardest hearts: and without *His* influence, the most probable means fail. Hence *He* is styled "the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Christ.' (Eph. i. 17.) This distinction, between the outward call and that which is effectual, is clearly marked in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (1 Thess. i. 5.) Nothing less than the supernatural teaching and agency of God's Holy Spirit, will ever put any man out of conceit with his own wisdom, his own righteousness, and his own sinful ways; or in other words, persuade and enable us to submit to Christ's teaching, righteousness, and dominion. Hence this remark in the prayer of Paul, (Eph. i. 16—20.) The outward word is necessary, because it is the means and grounds whereby the Spirit works with saving efficacy. The Spirit himself enters the heart by the medium of the truth, and by the same works all his works in us. That faith, especially, which is responsive to the outward call, "is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." It is not a natural gift either, or a common benefit; but supernatural, coming in virtue of the New Covenant, as a fruit of Christ's purchase. The word worketh effectually in the believer. This work of effectual calling is well set forth in our Shorter Catechism; it is the uniform doctrine of Scripture, and is confirmed by all the recorded experience of the saints, both in and out of the Bible. This effectual call is an important link in the golden chain, which connects God's eternity of purpose with the believer's eternal happiness.

INFERENCES.

1. How wonderfully adapted the gospel is to our condition. To whom is the gospel call addressed? To man, and to man as a sinner. On these two grounds we found our inference of its adaptation to the whole race. When God, who made us and knows our frame, speaks to us, we can not doubt but that he will do it in a manner suited to all. And such indeed are his communications: "Behold," said the angels to the shepherds, "we bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Our Lord unfolded the same view of the gospel, "And they shall come from the east and from the west." (Luke xiii. 29.) So did Paul in the following animated language: "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." "The promise is to you and to your children, and to them that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Rom. i. 14—16. Col. iii. 11.)

There is nothing in the nature of the gospel itself to exclude any; and there is nothing in the circumstances of any collectively or individually, to render the gospel an unnecessary or unfit message for them. The whole gospel, as before said, is summarily contained in these simple words of the Lord himself: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe on him should be saved." Now, where are the people, to whom all that this passage implies and all that it expresses, is not applicable and of the utmost importance to be known and believed? It implies the perishing condition of all. And is not this true of all, and most necessary for them to know? It unfolds the doctrine of everlasting life. And is not this suited to the immortality of our common nature, and to the boundless capacity for happiness and improvement which we possess—and to the sentence of eternal death passed upon all? It acquaints us, that "God's sending his Son into the world" is the grand mean of restoring our fallen nature, to the lost inheritance of primeval happiness and glory. It presents to our benighted minds, the most glorious of all beings, in the most amiable point of view; as love itself, and as in love unutterable, planning and carrying into effect the vast scheme of our redemption. Than such a doctrine, could any be better adapted to a race of beings like us, in circumstances of deplorable ignorance and guilt? It bears the stamp of divine wisdom on its face. The gospel is the wisdom of God. There is a striking fitness, a touching propriety in calling the hungry to a feast;

in inviting the weary to rest; in giving life to the perishing, pardon to the condemned, clothing to the naked, shelter to the wretched; in setting an open fountain before the unclean; in giving all freely to the poor and needy.

There is a beautiful fitness in the very manner in which God makes his communications to us in scripture. Not in a systematic, scientific form—in one long train of reasoning, which but few could comprehend—but in an interesting, familiar manner, frequently recurring, in different connexions and in different points of view, in the different pages of the Bible; so as to be readily apprehended, even by minds rude and undisciplined. Some have fancied that men must be civilized, before they be evangelized; that like the arts and sciences, the gospel can flourish only in a very improved state of society. But there is really no analogy between the introduction of the arts and sciences, and the introduction of the gospel. Like them, the gospel could never have been discovered and improved by accident, or the efforts of the human intellect. Society must be in a very advanced state, when philosophy, poetry, eloquence, natural science, wit and taste abound. But men, whether with or without these improvements, are ignorant and guilty before God; and to such, an embassy of love and of the knowledge of salvation, must always be necessary and always suitable.

A people, as the Athenians of old, may surpass all others in cultivation and refinement; whilst in religion, they may be deeper than those around them, in moral corruption and death. On the other hand, where science is unknown, and but few of the common arts and comforts of life enjoyed, the gospel may be successfully introduced. Witness the success of Elliott and Brainerd among the North American Indians: and in our own day, the reception of the gospel by the savages of the Sandwich Islands, in the Pacific Ocean. The reason is plain; men, every where, are in those circumstances of ignorance and guilt, for which the gospel is a divine and sovereign medicine. The learned and refined and amiable, often pertinaciously reject it, whilst the poor and simple embrace it, as good tidings of great joy.

An acute disputant, a learned critic, a scientific theologian, if he is nothing more, knows and believes less of the gospel, than a poor, ignorant, naked savage of the forest, who knows and feels that he is a sinner, and that God hates sin, and yet has mercy on the sinner; and feels joy and peace, and wonder and gratitude, arise in his bosom, at the news of God's Son dying for sinners. And this is our encouragement in

preaching the gospel, whether to the rude or refined, that "our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord."

2. How unreasonable, when the path of the sinner's duty is so plain before him, to be disturbed or stopped therein by difficulties, even though he may not be able satisfactorily to solve them. That difficulties attend the doctrine of the indefinite call of the gospel, it is in vain to deny. There are two metaphysical speculations, on human inability and on the eternal decrees of God, which have arisen on this subject, and called forth much controversy in the church. As to the decrees of God, we believe it to be as strong a dictate in reason as in scripture, that whatever God does, he was always determined to do; and that all he has determined to do, will certainly be done. If not all, but only a limited number are in the end saved, then God must have willed and determined to save only that number. But from this most reasonable and scripture principle, what has been the practical conclusion of some? Nothing less than this fearful plea, that it is unjust and tantalizing to offer salvation to any, but those ordained to eternal life; and that no unrenewed person can be called to believe and repent, because, neither we nor he can possibly know whether he be elected or not. Towards the beginning of the last century, some eminently learned and pious English Baptists denied it, on the very ground now mentioned, to be the duty of all men, to whom the gospel is preached, to believe in Christ and repent of their sins. But, is not this to commit the glaring absurdity, of making the secret purposes of God, concerning individuals of whom we know nothing, the rule of our duty, instead of the revealed will of our Maker? And does it not appear, at first sight, a very strange and unscriptural thing, to doubt, one moment, whether it be a sinner's duty to repent of his sins, and to believe in the Son of God offered to him in the gospel, and to love the Lord his God with all his heart? Peter and Paul, who preached the doctrine of election and the free offer of the gospel, surely never felt any scruples on such subjects. They addressed their hearers as men, as fallen men, as men blind and on the brink of a dreadful precipice. And, to the metaphysical speculation about the decrees, which produced such an obviously false and wicked conclusion, I oppose the plain and obvious fact, that God does call men, even in a state of unbelief and sin, to faith and repentance. If this is not our duty, then God can not condemn impenitence and unbelief, as sin. If we can not clear away any difficulty, may we not safely leave it to God to enlighten what is dark, when and how he

will; and in the mean time, let us mind the path of duty, than which nothing can be more plain.

As to the other speculation, about human ability and inabili y, I would return, in general, the same answer. So shackled were the before mentioned Baptists, by their erroneous views on this subject also, that they durst not invite the unconverted to come to Jesus, nor allow that any thing, spiritually good, was their duty; and required them to attend the outward services alone, as the only duties in their power. Now, although faith and repentance are the gifts of God, above and beyond our ability, who, with the Bible in his hand, can doubt that these are also the duties of sinners? That God never commands men to do any thing beyond the compass of their power, is a most erroneous principle. For 1. It amounts to a denial of the corruption of human nature. If man's ability be equal to his duty, or, which is the same thing, his duty not beyond his ability, his nature can not be corrupt; he can be in no worse state than Adam in Paradise, or the angels in heaven. 2. If we are corrupt and yet equal to our duty, then must the law have been curtailed, reduced, and squared to meet our feebleness and corruption, which would be most contrary to the divine perfection and government, and our own happiness. Whatever you may say of your inability, the path of duty is plain. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." To do all spiritual good, inward and outward, is incumbent on every man, regenerate and unregenerate. Faith, the leading duty and privilege of gospel hearers, is God's own command. If these things are not so, then you must have been released from responsibility to your Maker, you may act as you will, and yet hope for happiness. But, beware! in the judgment, nothing will be admitted as an apology for unbelief, ungodliness and unrighteousness. 3. The false principle, now opposed, would set aside the use of all means; for to say that we must not be called on to believe and repent, is the same thing as to say, that no means must be used by God for our instruction, conviction and repentance; and that the use of them must be useless and pernicious to ourselves, as adding to our condemnation, for attempting to do spiritual duties before we know that we are spiritual or gracious persons.

Dead as we are in trespasses and sins, we are not dead in such a sense, as to have neither judgment, conscience, understanding, hopes nor fears remaining. We are not reduced by sin to the condition of brutes or of inanimate dust and

clay. We continue rational and responsible creatures, for otherwise we could not be sinners. Spiritual death excludes not the use of means, nor yet excuses unbelief and wickedness. For if strong and overbearing moral depravity, and the absolute need of God's Holy Spirit to renew us, render us guiltless, then the more depraved we become, the less guilty we should be. On the contrary, there is such a fitness in the means of God's appointment, as to leave sinners inexcusable in rejecting the evidences, calls and invitations of the gospel. Nay, the gospel itself, in its doctrines, promises, calls and counsels, is the very and only means of breaking down the fearful barrier of depravity, by conveying new light and life into the souls of the dead in sin.

But, still say some, though God may use means, how call unbelievers themselves, to believe and repent? Is not this to give a false view to the grace of God, as if men must set about doing something to recommend them to God; as if man must begin, and God will come in after to support and assist him? But who of all the human race, I pray you, was beforehand with God, in meriting, soliciting and conceiving that God should reconcile the world to himself by making Christ a sin offering? Is not God beforehand with us also in addressing these very calls to us? And are not these calls the very method whereby he graciously draws sinners to himself? These calls are coupled with the clearest and freest declarations of grace. You are not invited to do any part of the work of reconciliation; but, because this is already done, you are graciously called to be reconciled to God, by looking to and believing in him, as reconciled in Christ. And does not the grace of the atonement warrant and enforce such calls? I might notice some texts which have been considered as superseding the necessity of the gospel call. (Rom. ix. 15, 18.) In these words the apostle answers an objection against the righteousness of God, in making a difference among men in the matter of election to spiritual blessings, and resolves it entirely into God's sovereignty. Does it make grace less sovereign and free, that He makes use of the calls of the word to bring his elect to the knowledge and enjoyment of salvation? Faith and repentance are gifts of God, yet come in the use of means. The grace of God, in election and effectual calling, produceth "willing and running," as effects and evidences of its power; but "willing and running" have no influence, as the meritorious cause or condition of our being chosen and called. (John vi. 44.) This shows that the Father anticipates us by his preventing grace,

but at the same time it establishes the doctrine of the gospel call. For, as the Father draws by divine teaching, (verse 45,) so he teaches by the Spirit, working with the word and making the doctrines, calls and motives effectual for drawing sinners unto Christ. (Rom. x. 20. Isa. lxv. 1.) These passages so far from setting aside, confirm the gospel call, and show that God, of his free preventive grace, sent his word among the Gentiles, and addressed to them its gracious calls, when they were neither seeking him nor serving him. On the whole, the calls of the gospel are subservient to the free grace of God, in the conversion of sinners; and attended though this doctrine be with difficulties, which perhaps may never be fully solved in time, yet it should not be made, on this account, to explain away your duties and privileges. The King's high-way is open before you: "Walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

3. How important it is, when Christ is proposed as the immediate and only relief of the guilty, that you yield an instantaneous compliance with the call of Eternal Wisdom. Warranted by our commission to set life and death before you, I beseech you to "choose life that you may live." Christ is now in your offer. To-day, hear his voice, and your soul shall live. It is your present duty and right to receive and rest upon Christ, as freely offered to you in the gospel. Away, instantly, with all captious, insidious objections against the call of your Saviour to come to him. Open your ears to the heavenly strains of love and mercy, proceeding from your Saviour's blessed voice, which are or should be more delightful to you than the most melodious notes of music. No saying so worthy of your acceptance, as that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." The door of hope is open—the great Physician stretches out his hand to welcome and to heal you. From the throne of grace, a gratuitous tender is now made to you of all the blessings you need: "All things are ready"—the covenant of grace is exhibited, sealed with the blood of God's Son—the great sacrifice is offered—the sacrifice of sweet smelling savor—God is ready to forgive—the surety righteousness of the Redeemer is brought near you—the Spirit of grace and holiness is ready to take away the heart of stone. The promise is to you. Wisdom's maidens are crying to you: "Wisdom hath builded her house—whoso is simple, let him turn in hither—come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled." Angels are ready to tune their harps with joy at your return: "All things are ready, come to the marriage." Come, not

doubting God's love, or Christ's all-sufficiency. Ye lovers of pleasure—ye earthly minded—ye aged sinners—ye young, who are gaily sporting away your precious time in fatal levity—ye careless ones, who are at ease in Zion: Ho! every one that thirsteth, come and take all freely. What answer have ye to give to Wisdom's loud and hearty call? Must we return, and say to the master of the gospel feast, as did the servants in the parable? "They that were bidden would not come." Shall we part from you with the language of complaint and astonishment on our lips, at your obduracy? "Lord, who hath believed our report?" Nay, rather give us "cause to thank God, that when ye received the word, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as in truth the word of the living God." Give us cause to say of you as Paul of his Thessalonian converts: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) Or, as he did of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3. The only real commendation of any ministry, and demonstration of its efficacy, is the conversion of souls. Say then, with Peter, when Christ calls you: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John vi. 68.)

This day is salvation come to you: to-morrow you may not live to see. Time flies. The king of terrors is on his way, and is drawing the arrows from his quiver, that shall, ere long, lay you in the dust. Pause, and ponder well your goings. Your souls are at stake. You must soon stand before God in judgment. Yield yourselves to the sweet attractions of God's great love. "God commendeth his love, in that he so loved us, and sent his only Son to save us." O, what marvellous love in Christ, to be sent, and to come from heaven to earth, to die for the ungodly! Do you think of this wonder, or feel it at all? Christ is at this moment standing and knocking at the door of your hearts. He is looking into your hearts. O, what indifference he sees! Will you not open to admit this divine guest? Had it not been for his love and grace, you and I, and all living, had been within a few hours of eternal damnation. Your ignorance is not guiltless, your unbelief is not harmless, but the greatest of sins. Your depravity and moral helplessness are no excuses for your unbelief. Do you ask when you are to comply with the call? I answer, immediately. No time so good as *now*, for saying, "Lord, I come unto thee. Draw me, I will run after thee." We are not authorized, and would not venture to

preach to you, that you may delay believing because you feel yourselves in a bad situation; because you feel not the actual breathings of the Spirit on your souls; for the Lord's command indispensably binds you to a present performance, whatever you do, or do not feel in yourselves. To a present, designed self-murderer, Paul and Silas said, without putting in any qualification: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) No sinner, indeed, will believe till the Spirit manifest to him the Redeemer's Glory; yet this does not set aside your duty and your right, at this and at all seasons, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And, would to God, you saw and felt the necessity of the Spirit's powerful presence, to make the gospel call effectual. It is a work for a God, and a God only. The sight and feeling of this would not keep you back from duty, but only from setting about it in your own strength. The Spirit begins on the understanding, which he finds in a state of blindness and darkness, and into which he conveys heavenly light, and knowledge, and thus breaks down that ignorance which is one of the main props of the throne of iniquity. He brings the soul also to judge sin evil, Christ lovely and excellent, and thus rectifies those false judgments by which Satan maintains his power in the heart. He dethrones the proud reasonings and imaginations of the mind. The bondage of the will he breaks down, inclining it to choose, close in with, and cleave to God and his holy commandments. In efficaciously and victoriously inclining and determining the will, he does not invade or infringe its natural liberty, but works without violence.

Thus too, He disentangles and disengages the affections from sin, and gives them a proper course and direction. In his working, the Spirit infallibly effects what he designed. Without him, sin would for ever stand its ground against the most lively and eloquent administration of the ordinances; but, when the word, which is the "sword of the Spirit," is wielded, by his own arm, sin falls before it. Flee, then, to this spirit of life and grace. As the feeling of hunger excites you to ask for food, let a sense of your need and wretchedness, be an exciting cause to urge you to the Spirit, who is ready to do abundantly for you, more than you can ask. Join all other means with prayer. They are *means*, therefore neglect them not; and *but means*, therefore rely not on them. By these the Spirit effects his purposes.

The sun makes the earth fruitful, yet the husbandman must plough and sow. No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the

Holy Ghost. Pray, then, without ceasing, as did Paul, "that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him." Many clog the freedom of the gospel offer with conditions, for fear of antinomianism; but this is itself a most dangerous species of this heresy. Come to the Saviour as you are, with your desires, your sins and sorrows; and come presently. Sit not still. If you think that you must first render yourselves worthy, you are cherishing a principle of self-righteousness, which is in direct opposition to the cross of Christ; and the farther you advance on this road, you are hourly becoming more insensible to the call of mercy, and sinking deeper and deeper in condemnation and darkness.

4. This subject naturally and loudly calls upon us all, to try whether we are or are not partakers of the great blessing of *effectual* calling. Whether we are the genuine children of Zion, or a spurious brood of impostors and hypocrites?—is no trifling question: and we may know whether we are the one or the other, by judging, according to scriptural rule and evidence, whether we have been really and truly called, like Paul, by the grace of God. For, whomsoever the Spirit of God has persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ, as freely offered to him in the gospel, on that sinner the faith of the gracious offer and message has made an impression, corresponding to the blessed truths which faith receives. All persons effectually called, are marked indelibly with an assemblage of qualities, of a holy and heavenly nature, which are the exact counterpart of the holy and heavenly calling, of which they are partakers.

Here, then, you see both the rule and wisdom, by which we now wish you to try and pass judgment on yourselves.

From all that is said in scripture, on the subject of effectual calling, we may easily see what those heavenly qualities are, which mark the character of those who are called. "Calling," is one link of that golden chain which connects God's eternal purpose of love, with the eternal glorification of all the objects of that love. "They are called according to God's purpose—predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son"—predestinated and called to the participation of that image. They are denominated "a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Pet. ii. 9.) "The God of all grace hath called you unto his eternal glory by

Christ Jesus." (1 Pet. v. 10.) "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose." (2 Tim. i. 9.) "I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling." (Phil. iii. 14.) "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit," &c. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.) "Ye know how we exhorted you that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." (1 Thess. ii. 11, 12.) "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (1 Thess. iv. 7.) "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit," &c. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

From these various passages, you may clearly perceive the Spirit, the qualities, aims and hopes, which characterize the called in Christ Jesus. They are holy brethren, holy in soul, body and spirit—high and heavenly in their views and pursuits—daily, hourly, aspiring to the kingdom and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are called from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God, from the misery of hell, to the inheritance of everlasting life. Such are the marks of those who are called. Do these marks belong to you? Is such your character? But, how is this character produced? The truth, as it is in Jesus, is the mean or instrument by which these holy and divine impressions are stamped upon the soul. The truth, understood and received in love, leaves, like the seal upon wax, or the die upon metal, the image of itself upon the soul into which it enters. Hence these words of Paul: "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you." (Rom. vi. 17, &c.) The gospel doctrine is compared to a mould, into which melted metals are poured, to receive the form of the mould. In the day of effectual calling, when the sinner from the heart, most willingly and sincerely obeys the gospel, receives Christ in the gospel offer, then he yields to the forming efficacy of the mould of gospel doctrine, and is thus made a new man, both in principle and practice. The more fully and closely that faith seizes hold of the truth as it is in Jesus, the deeper and truer will be the impression on the heart and character; and the resemblance will go on increasing, just in proportion to the increase of knowledge and faith. The very same faith in Christ, which places you under the blood of the atonement,

for protection from wrath, brings you under the operation of its sanctifying power. Faith, cleaving to and exercising the thoughts and affections, on this great and wonderful subject, enlarges, deepens, strengthens the impression of the divine character, and raises the believer in the scale of spiritual excellence, till his conformity to the divine image become entire, and his communion with God unbroken. The Holy Spirit, bringing the things concerning Christ into contact with our affections, thus binds our heart to God and heaven, by the golden chain of love. The joy, the hope, the love-inspiring gospel is the root from which all the duties of holiness, derive their life and vigor. The divine power gives all things pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us. A deficiency in christian virtues and graces, is ascribed to a forgetfulness of the great atonement, in the faith of which they were "purged from their old sins." We escape the pollutions of the world "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. ii. 20.) The grace of God that bringeth salvation—teacheth "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world." (1 Tit. ii. 11.) Paul having reminded Titus, that christians had been delivered from enmity and degeneracy by the knowledge of the love, kindness and mercy of God, adds: "these things," the doctrines of free grace mentioned in the four preceding verses, opposed to the unprofitable and vain things, foolish questions and genealogies, "I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." (Tit. iii. 4–8.)

Here then, christians, you have a scriptural test to try yourselves by. Do your hearts and conduct, then, bear witness to the purifying influence of the cross? No real believer in the blood of the atonement, is fearless and careless of sinning. Faith worketh by love, which love is the life-blood of the Christian family. Its presence is the seal of heaven on the soul, its absence the mark of perdition. Now, this law of love or of holiness, is written on every believer's heart, and by no other instrument but by the free mercy and grace of the gospel, proclaiming pardon, and thus overcoming the power of sin, and moulding the heart to the love of God and holiness. It is, therefore, a perversion of the gospel to teach men to cast off their sins, as a preparatory step to believing, and a condition of pardon. Repentance naturally follows faith in the pardoning mercy of God. Real sorrow of heart, on account of sin, can arise only from the

source of the amazing contrast between the wonderful love of God, and our infinite unworthiness. It is when we look on him whom we have pierced, that we truly mourn; and when we know that God establishes his covenant with us that we become ashamed—when we see sin connected with the blood of him who gave himself for our sins, that we truly loathe it. The more freely grace is proclaimed, and the more deeply sin is condemned; the more unworthy must we appear to ourselves. Godly sorrow, then, and a return to righteousness and holiness, have their source with free grace. This point cannot be pressed too much.

What impressions, then, have been made on your hearts by your views of the love and justice of God, manifested on the cross? Bring yourselves to a close and frequent scrutiny on this point. Are love, joy, gratitude, hatred of sin, the fear of God, wrought in your hearts?

God manifested in Jesus Christ, as the just God and Saviour, forgiving sin through the blood of the atonement, is the great spiritual mould into which the christian is cast, and from which the living form of the christian character derives its features. If you were closely and accurately cast into this mould, your hearts and lives would be exactly conformed to the law. Compare yourselves, then, with the law, that you may see how far you are from the form of the gospel mould. For one great use of the law is to try by this test, whether your views of the gospel are right. The law comes to be written on the heart by the faith of the gospel.

Have your views of God, in the gospel, altered your heart and drawn it to the love of God, and called forth its horror and indignation against sin? If you have not found it to be a doctrine according to godliness, your views of the gospel can not be right. If you refuse to try yourselves now, yet there is one above who will soon come to try every man's work of what sort it is. "Who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth?" They who now will not hearken to the calls of God, God will not hear them, though they call to him at the judgment. You are standing on the brink of eternity;—in a few days you shall all be launched into it.

May we all in time listen to wisdom's gracious calls:—"Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man." "Hear and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. JOHN ANDERSON, D. D.

Mr. Anderson was born on the south side of the Tweed, but so near it, that the congregation where his parents attended public worship was on the Scotch side. He was baptized by the venerable James Morrison of Norham, many years stated clerk to the General Associate Synod of Scotland. It is believed that his youth was passed, under the pastoral care of Mr. Morrison. It is certain that he entertained, for that venerable man, the most affectionate regard during the whole course of Mr. Morrison's long life; and a regular correspondence by letter was maintained between them, until Mr. Morrison's death. The writer of this sketch, recollects being shown by Dr. Anderson a letter from Mr. Morrison to him, written after he was ninety-one years of age.

Mr. Anderson was born about the year 1748. But little is known of his parents. If his own statements, very incidentally made respecting them, are rightly recollected, his father died before his remembrance; his mother set out with him for America, but died on the passage. He would sometimes allude to practices and remarks of his mother which showed her to be a woman of strong mind and unaffected piety. He was an only child; and never having had any of his own kindred in this country, and his habits of thinking and current of remarks, seldom leading him to speak of himself or his family connections; nothing is particularly known concerning them, more than what has been just related. His education was received in Scotland, but at which of the universities is likewise unknown. Nor indeed is this a matter of much consequence, especially in the case of a man of such extensive and various learning as Dr. Anderson; whose whole life was devoted to the successful pursuit of knowledge; and

whose attainments plainly showed, that he had left the usual acquirements of an academic or university course far behind. He studied Theology under the care of the Professor of the Associate Synod, who, it is believed, was at the time of his course, the younger Moncrief. After having completed the usual course of study, he was licensed: and having preached for some time as a probationer, it was found that his voice was too feeble, for the audiences which then generally attended the worshipping assemblies of the Associate Church in Scotland. And although it was his ardent desire to serve his divine Master and his generation, in preaching the everlasting gospel, yet on account of his voice, he was obliged to abandon it in Scotland. His accuracy as a scholar, and particularly his very correct taste, in language and every thing connected with composition, were known—for as a linguist and a *belles-lettres* scholar, he was justly entitled to take the first rank among the scholars of that age—and when he desisted from public speaking, he found ready employment as a corrector of the press, in large book-printing establishments, both in Glasgow and Edinburgh. And in this business he occupied himself during several years afterwards, that he remained in Scotland.

During the time that he was thus employed, his mind was still occupied about the concerns of the church. He found leisure to compose and publish a series of Essays on several important religious subjects. These Essays show a deep and thorough acquaintance with revealed truth, and a mind sensitive to its interests. Those who will compare these Essays with his latest writings, published nearly fifty years afterwards, can not but be struck with the undeviating consistency with which he held fast his religious principles. This publication brought him into favorable notice, both as a divine and a scholar.

When the Coalescence between some members of the Presbytery of Pennsylvania and the Reformed Presbytery in this country, in 1782, took place, by which the Associate Presbytery was almost annihilated, and when the Presbytery's need of aid was known in Scotland; Mr. Anderson was recommended to come immediately to America, and render such aid to the brethren here, as he might be enabled to do. Supposing that the audiences must necessarily be much smaller here, than they generally were in Scotland, it was thought that he might be usefully employed in preaching. Accordingly, he made his arrangements to come as soon as practicable, and arrived in Philadelphia in 1783. The first sermon he preach-

ed after his arrival, was from Psalm xlvi. 5. "God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God shall help her and that right early." This was in Mr. Marshall's meeting-house in Philadelphia. In the choosing of his text and in his discourse, he seemed to have a particular reference to the state of the Associate Church in this country. Those who heard this discourse, considered it highly seasonable and reviving to the interests and refreshing to the friends of truth. Mr. Marshall, knowing what had been his difficulty with regard to preaching in Scotland, and apprehensive that the same cause might prevent the edification of his people on that occasion, requested the congregation, before Mr. Anderson commenced, to draw as near the pulpit as possible. He was, however, heard with more satisfaction than had been apprehended. And although his own congregation and those who became familiar with his manner of speaking, heard him without any particular inconvenience, yet it was always a complaint with strangers, through the whole of his ministry, that they heard him with difficulty. It may be here remarked, that although the difficulty that attended his speaking might in part be ascribed to the organic structure of the vocal organs, yet much of it doubtless arose from habits which were the effects of a strong degree of constitutional diffidence—a feeling often found in the greatest men. Those who had an opportunity of closely observing Dr. Anderson's habits, could readily enough see, that with this difficulty, he had to contend through his whole life, unless when a sense of duty, arising from a regard to some truth either in doctrine or practice, roused all the energies of his mind; then for a time he would appear wholly to overcome it. Under such circumstances, he has spoken during the whole of the public exercises of a day, so as not only to be heard with ease over a large assembly, but in a manner truly eloquent. Indeed, he seldom preached a whole day, in which he did not in some part of his discourses, become roused up to speak, for a few minutes, in the spirit, both as to language and manner, of the most genuine eloquence.

During the first two years after the Union, the operations of the Presbytery were confined chiefly to the eastern counties of Pennsylvania. And there in the vacancies under Presbytery's care, Dr. Anderson labored with great faithfulness and distinguished success for that period. For the intelligent and the pious always heard him with interest and satisfaction. And such always found delight and refreshment in

the clear arrangement of his discourses, and the strain of evangelical doctrine, in which they never failed to abound.

During the summer of 1784, the attention of all the members of Presbytery was much occupied with the preparation of the Testimony; for although the drafting of it was assigned to Mr. Beveridge, there was need of frequent consultations among the members, and frequent meetings of Presbytery: so that although there were applications from several places west of the Alleghany mountains as well as from the State of New York, no assistance could be sent, as the members could not be so far separated, until both the Narrative and Testimony were completed and adopted. This was done, as stated in another part of this volume, viz. the Testimony on the 25th of August, and the Narrative on the 25th of October of that year. It is to be borne in mind that there were then but four members in the Presbytery, viz. Messrs. Marshall, Clarkson, Anderson and Beveridge. Mr. Anderson was at that time stated clerk of Presbytery. As soon as circumstances permitted, Mr. Beveridge was sent to the State of New York, and Dr. Anderson to the western parts of Pennsylvania; and where he was the instrument of planting those congregations in which he was eventually settled.

The legal spirit which prevailed in the General Assembly of the church of Scotland, and which prompted that judicatory in 1720 to condemn the Marrow of Modern Divinity, and the doctrines taught in that book, very early manifested itself in the most numerous branch of the Presbyterian Church in this country. In 1754, the New Castle Presbytery issued a warning against Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot, then newly arrived, in which that Presbytery virtually condemned the Marrow doctrine. This called forth a very able defence of these doctrinal points, and refutation of the warning, by Mr. Gellatly. But still these doctrines were extensively opposed by many ministers in that body. To establish his people in these fundamental gospel truths, Dr. Anderson was led to preach on the nature of Justifying Faith. The continued opposition made to the doctrines of the Reformation on this subject, at length led him to embody his views on it, in six discourses, in which "The Scripture Doctrine of the Appropriation, which is in the Nature of Saving Faith, is Stated and Illustrated." This is probably the clearest and most satisfactory treatise on the subject extant in the English language. It was first published in Philadelphia, 1793, and a second edition in Edinburgh, 1797, and a third in Philadelphia, 1823.

While on the subject of Dr. Anderson's labors as an au-

thor, we may here also notice his treatise on Psalmody, "Vindiciæ Cantus Dominici." This work, which will long remain as a standard work on the subject, and will be held in estimation as an able defence of the scriptural purity of divine worship, especially in the ordinance of praise, was occasioned by the very general introduction of a human psalmody, in the worship of God, instead of the songs of inspiration, by the General Assembly Presbyterian Church, in this country. This work was published in Philadelphia, in 1800. This, again, was succeeded in 1806, by his Letters in defence of Hervey and Marshall, against the attacks of Mr. Bellamy of New England, who not only opposed, but misrepresented the views of these eminent British divines. This work is entitled "Precious Truth," and is a valuable defence and elucidation of the views of the fathers of the Reformation, on the subject of Justification and other collateral doctrines. His last and largest work, is his "Dialogues on Church Communion," published at Pittsburgh, 1820. The general reason for the appearance of this work, was the prevalence of Latitudinarian sentiments, on the subject of church fellowship; but a special call for such a work, arose out of the publication of the late Dr. Mason of New York, entitled "A Plea for Communion on Catholic Principles;" in which work the popular sentiments and feelings of the day were embodied and presented in a very plausible form. In this work the reader will find Dr. Mason's arguments stripped of their sophistical and gaudy dress, and the scriptural doctrine of visible church-fellowship, very clearly set forth. And in another part of the work, the principles of the Associate Church, wherein they differ from other denominations, very clearly and candidly stated.

In addition to these writings, which we may safely predict will yet be held, and at no very distant period we trust, in higher estimation than they have ever yet been, by the friends of truth, Dr. Anderson contributed to the defence of truth in his day, by several other publications, though of a more ephemeral character.

As an author, Dr. Anderson contributed largely to promote the cause of truth and piety in this country. And those who knew him intimately, can attest that he did this no less as a pastor and professor of Theology, and by that bright exemplification of all the christian graces, which shone in his whole character and conversation. It is not proposed in this brief sketch, to do justice to his memory in any of these particulars; but an outline at least should be entered on record,

if nothing more be done, that his example may be remembered and imitated by those who would be "followers of them, who through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

He was settled as pastor over the united congregations of (what was then called) Mill Creek and Harman's Creek, near the western line of Pennsylvania, which then lay scattered over a great extent of country. As circumstances permitted, new charges were erected within the same bounds; and his was contracted within narrower limits, until his meeting-houses were but eight miles distant from each other; the names of the congregations being changed to Service and King's Creek.

In the discharge of the various pastoral duties, Dr. Anderson was a remarkable example of diligence and fidelity. Indeed his whole heart was in his work—he lived wholly for his divine Master, and for the spiritual interests of his people. Perhaps no man since the days of the apostles, was more eminently endowed with the true spirit of his station. His pulpit exercises, in their matter, were always solid, judicious and practical; in method, distinct; in arrangement, natural; in style, like his printed compositions, they were models of plainness, simplicity and perspicuity.

As a professor of theology, which office he held from about the year 1792 until 1819, he was no less distinguished for his industry and singular usefulness. His lectures were written and re-written, from time to time, as his own reflections and various and extensive reading suggested improvements. But perhaps none of his qualifications as a professor, contributed so much to form the character of his students, as his critical acuteness in judging of a discourse. If a discourse was deficient in perspicuity or logical arrangement, his well trained and judicious mind soon detected and convincingly exhibited the fault. And the ear of the adept in music was not more quick to discern a discordant note, than was his to detect a sentiment that accorded not with the oracles of God; or even an expression that varied from "sound speech that cannot be condemned."

At the age of seventy-one or two his growing infirmities admonished him to resign the professorship, which he had held about twenty-seven years He had several times before proposed tendering his resignation, but had still been prevailed upon by the members of Synod to defer it.

His bodily constitution was strong, and until the year before he resigned the professorship, he had never been prevented from preaching a single Sabbath, by sickness or bodily infirmity; when he had an attack of sickness, which greatly

impaired his constitution, and from that time he began visibly to decline in health and bodily vigor. But he still continued to discharge the various pastoral duties with a zeal and activity which yielded but slowly and reluctantly to his increasing frailties, until April 6th, 1830, when, in the 82d year of his age, and 48th of the exercise of his ministry in this country, he was suddenly called to his eternal rest.

The particulars of his death were singular, and are worthy of being recorded. He preached on Sabbath, two days previous to his death, at King's Creek, the more distant place from his residence. On Monday a meeting of the congregation was held, in order to take measures to procure an assistant to their venerable pastor. He attended at this meeting, and preached a discourse from these words, "Thy name is like ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." (Song i. 3.)After sermon he rode on towards Buffalo meeting house, which was about twenty miles from King's Creek, where the Presbytery was to meet next day. He was accompanied by Mr. John Leiper, one of his elders. He sat in Presbytery all day, until evening, when it adjourned, and took his usual share and interest in the proceedings. After Presbytery adjourned, he and his elder rode about three miles homeward, and lodged at the house of Mr. James Patterson, an elder of the congregation at Buffalo. He complained a little of weariness, and retired to rest about 10 o'clock. Mr. Leiper retired also to the same room in which Dr. A. slept. He awoke, and remarked that he felt some headache, but appeared again immediately to fall asleep. About midnight he arose out of bed, and instantly fell on the floor. Both Mr. Leiper and Mr. Patterson heard the fall and sprang to his assistance; but before a light could be procured his spirit had departed to God who gave it.

Thus was this eminent and faithful servant permitted to continue in the actual service of his Master, in which he delighted, until the last hour of his long and useful life.

Dr. Anderson was capable of bearing an application to study, to which few men could ever attain. Unless when called out on official duties, he seldom spent less than fourteen hours out of the twenty-four in diligent application to study, or in devotional exercises. His body and his mind seemed alike insensible to the weariness of study, and neither seemed to require refreshment by exercise. As an evidence of the soundness of his bodily faculties, his hearing was unimpaired; and he was able to read in a small pocket Bible without glasses to the last.

As to his Christian graces, meekness and humility might be said to predominate. He was also most conscientiously and scrupulously tender of the feelings of all, even to the very least, with whom he had intercourse.

Dr. Anderson was married, shortly after his settlement, to Elizabeth McCoy, a member of his own congregation, but had no issue. Mrs. Anderson still survives, though laboring under the infirmities of extreme old age.

In closing this short sketch of the life and character of one, who stood to the writer in the interesting and important relation of pastor and theological teacher, the words of the Apostle suggest themselves, "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

SERMON,

BY THE REV. JOHN ANDERSON, D. D.*

"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." (Prov. xix. 27.)

In this exhortation, which speaketh to us with peculiar earnestness, as to children, we observe, 1. An evil of which men are in danger, which is, that of erring from the words of knowledge. By the words of knowledge, we are to understand the truths which God hath revealed in his word; which

* This Sermon was published shortly after it was preached, to which was prefixed the following Preface by the Author:—

"The substance of the following discourse was delivered on the Monday after a communion Sabbath. Some, it seems, have represented it as of a schismatical tendency; and others, as having little or no relation to practical religion, and therefore improper for the occasion on which it was delivered. The writer hopes, that the candid and deliberate perusal of it, will with many, be sufficient to remove these objections.

"What is aimed at in this discourse is, to strike at a principal root of the numerous divisions now in the visible church. It teaches that we ought not to be in a state of separation from any church-communion, but upon such grounds as are scriptural; and upon such considerations, as involving the declarative glory of God, are of inconceivable and infinite importance. Were this doctrine embraced, there would be no separate church-communions upon trivial pretences; or for the sake of religious tenets or usages in the worship of God which have no foundation in his word; no separate church-communions on account of local customs, uncertain opinions, or uninstituted ceremonies; no separate church-communions founded on the narrow and interested views of a faction.

"What is here attempted is a seasonable application of the cautions, with which the scriptures abound, against false teachers. To direct church-members to the right use and application of such cautions will be the endeavor of the faithful ministers of Christ; an endeavor which is rendered peculiarly necessary by the corruptions which prevail in the present state of the visible church.

"Those who reckon that practical religion is not concerned in the subject of this discourse, should consider that true believers have it for their distinguishing character, that they abhor false doctrine, and avoid communion with the teachers of it. (John x. 5. Rev. xiv. 4.)

"That he who chooses the weak and despised things of the world to confound the most boasted things of it, may accompany this attempt with his blessing, is, through grace, the desire of the Writer.

"York Borough, May, 7th, 1794."

the apostle calls *wholesome words. even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.* To err from them is to deny them, or to be obstinately attached to any contrary opinions or practices. 2. The cause of that evil, which goes under the specious name of instruction, but which is to be understood of the schemes or methods that are taken to draw away persons from the faith, love and profession of the words of knowledge. 3. The duty to which we are exhorted with respect to this pretended instruction, which is, that we should cease to hear it; that we should be on our guard not only against erroneous doctrines, but against all the schemes or methods that are taken to propagate them.

It is now proposed, through divine aid,

I. *To consider the evil of erring from the words of knowledge:*

II. *To enquire what is to be understood by that instruction which causeth to err; and*

III. *To explain and enforce the duty of ceasing to hear all such instruction.*

I. *The evil of erring from the words of knowledge appears from such considerations as the following:*

1. Erring from the words of knowledge is direct rebellion against the authority of God, whose law binds us to believe whatever he reveals. The language of obstinate error is, I prefer my own wisdom and my own will in such a particular to the wisdom and will of God himself. Besides, it is a direct breach of an express command frequently repeated, *Do not err—Be not deceived.*

2. Supposing the erroneous not to be so far given up to a desperately wicked and reprobate mind, as openly to deny the authority and majesty of God shining in the holy Scriptures; supposing them to be such as allow the Scriptures to be the word of God, the only rule of faith and practice; yet their sin is exceedingly aggravated in regard that, while they represent their error as contained in the Scriptures, they make the God of truth a liar; nay, they make him the father of a lie. Since there is so much impiety and blasphemy in the perversion of Scripture for the support of falsehood, with what fear and trembling should we guard against that perversion; against *walking in craftiness, or handling the word of God deceitfully?*

3. Error proceeds from the corrupt bias which the human heart received at the fall. The understanding was then involved in darkness, and the will possessed with the love of it. It has ever since been the case with respect to spiritual and

eternal things, that men have loved darkness rather than light. *God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions;* among which none were fraught with more malignity than opinions pertinaciously maintained in opposition to the simplicity of revealed truth.

4. Erring from the words of knowledge is that which chiefly begins and keeps up divisions in the church of God. That it must be so, is evident, if we only consider what is the true unity of the church, namely, *the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God;* a joint or unanimous adherence to the words of knowledge. It is also evident from the history of the church, especially since the New Testament dispensation took place, which is almost wholly taken up with the account of the divisions occasioned by erroneous opinions with respect to the doctrine, the worship or the government of the church. When we lament the divisions of the visible church, we should not forget to lament the numerous errors and corruptions that support those divisions.

5. Error is ruining to the souls of men. Heresies are among *the works of the flesh;* of which the apostle says, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Hence the apostle Peter represents the unlearned and unstable as wresting the scriptures unto their own destruction. Who can tell how much danger there is in making God a liar? But those errors which are manifestly contrary to what has been already known and acknowledged by the church of God, are more dangerous than such as cannot be said to be so; as being errors which imply a peculiar contempt of the charge which our Lord, repeatedly gives to his people, *That which you have hold fast.* To signify the danger of error to men's souls, the teachers or propagators of it are called in scripture, subverters of souls, and ravenous wolves, not sparing the flock.

Such being the evil and danger of error, how much ought professors to watch against it! Many of them have such confidence in their own wisdom and understanding, that they are under no apprehension of being seduced by the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge. This glorying is not good. Those whom the Lord graciously keeps from error are made sensible that they cannot keep themselves from it; they dare not lean on their own understanding. They are aware of the unspeakable hazard of resting in mere head-notions of divine truths, that is, in such knowledge as may be attained by our natural understanding.

They are sure that it is another sort of knowledge which is given to some in virtue of such promises as these: "Thus saith the Lord the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go: I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free: When he who is the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." Believers have such a spiritual discernment of divine truths in their native beauty and excellence, as makes them cleave thereto with purpose of heart: And according to the measure of this spiritual and saving knowledge of divine truths, the inward frame of their minds and their outward practice are moulded into conformity to the truths thus spiritually and savingly known.

II. We are next to enquire, *what is the instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge?*

By this instruction we are to understand, as was hinted before, the various methods that are taken to ensnare church-members, or to seduce them from the faith, love and profession of the truth. These methods are so many and various, that volumes might be filled with an account of them. They are such as the following: Magnifying one truth or duty, and then setting it in opposition to another, from which there is a design of seducing us: representing an error as inseparable from something which is undoubtedly truth or duty: building upon detached expressions of scripture, without regard to the scope or connection of the place in which they stand, or to the current doctrine of the scripture on the same subject: sometimes immoderately extolling, sometimes invidiously disparaging societies or particular persons, in order to gain credit to some favorite error, or to divert attention from some hated truth: first proposing an error as a harmless inoffensive opinion, which it would be uncharitable to suppose a man to be a whit the worse for entertaining; and then representing all endeavors to discover the real nature and tendency of such an opinion as nothing but controversy, which christians are advised not to meddle with; repeating, at the same time, the most groundless misrepresentations of the contrary truth, as if they were arguments.

He must be ignorant indeed of the opposition which has been made to the cause of God and truth in former and in present times, who can be at any loss for examples of such methods as these now mentioned; which have been common

ly employed to cause church-members to err from the words of knowledge.

In general, the instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge, is either that of individuals, or that of particular societies or church-communions. The instruction causing to err, of individuals, lies either in the sophistry and color of reasoning, by which they attempt to justify their error, or in the good words and fair speeches, whereby they deceive the hearts of the simple. The instruction that causeth to err includes all the sleight of individuals and *cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

With regard to a particular church communion, it is chargeable with the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge, so far as some error in doctrine, or some corruption in worship, or in government, serves to distinguish it from other communions, the support of that error being the scope of its peculiar constitution, and, in a great measure, of its public administrations. Thus, when Jeroboam was raised to the throne of the ten tribes, he got a new church-communion constituted for the maintenance of some errors, which seemed to be for the interest of his government; such as, that it was not necessary for the people to go up three times a year to Jerusalem: that persons of the other tribes might officiate as priests, as well as those of the tribe of Levi: that the passover might be kept on the day which Jeroboam devised of his own heart, as well as on the day appointed in the law of Moses. These tenets were employed in the whole of the public worship that was performed at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and in all the public administrations of the priests of that corrupt communion, whether they formally insisted on them in their discourses or not. They never appeared in the character of public teachers, or of priests which Jeroboam had made; but they might be justly considered as teaching and propagating the tenets now mentioned. Hence they were continually a snare in "Mizpeh, and a net spread upon mount Tabor."

In like manner, every particular church-communion, considered as distinct from, and opposite to other church-communions, exists for the sake of some peculiar errors or truths whereby they are distinguished from others.

Thus, the Popish church exists for the purpose of maintaining the universal headship of the Pope over the visible church, the equality, or rather superiority of the church's authority to that of the scriptures, justification by works, the worshipping of saints and angels, and of images; purgatory,

transubstantiation, and other abominations. The Episcopal church exists for the support of a certain order of pastors to whom they appropriate the name of bishops, and who are rulers of other pastors; and also for the maintaining of some superstitious modes of worship, as the use of a liturgy or prescribed forms of prayer in public worship, the keeping of certain holy-days, the posture of kneeling at the Lord's table. The Methodist church exists for the singular purpose of maintaining the inutility of all particular forms of worship or church order; and the utility, notwithstanding that, of their own, which is neither taken from the scriptures, nor agreeable to the practice of any of the Reformed Churches;—for the purpose of maintaining that the officers of the church ought to be travelling preachers, who have no particular charge, class-leaders, stewards, and a number of others lately instituted;—lastly, for the purpose of teaching that there is hardly any religion in holding any set of opinions; but a great deal in holding all the five articles (as they have been commonly called) of the Arminians. Independent churches exist for the purpose of maintaining, that the exercise of church government and discipline belongs to the whole body of church members, and not in any peculiar sense, to the pastors; and that the whole power of governing each particular congregation (that is, each society consisting of such a number as can conveniently join together in the same time and place, in the same acts of public worship) is confined within itself. The Baptist church exists for the purpose of maintaining that adult persons are the only subjects capable of baptism, and that there is no baptism by the application of water in sprinkling, or in any other way than immersion or dipping.

It may be asked, "for what purpose does the communion of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania exist in this country, and what are their distinguishing principles?" We answer, that it exists for the purpose of holding a public and judicial testimony for the doctrine and order of the church of Christ: In which they testify and declare from the word of God, such articles as follow—That the covenant of works was made with Adam as the representative of all his posterity descending from him by ordinary generation—That man is now in a fallen and ruined state, and can not help himself by his doing or suffering therefrom—That the Lord Jesus Christ, as the surety of the elect, has, by his obedience to the law as a covenant, and satisfaction to the justice of God, purchased eternal redemption for all his people, and they only;—as election, redemption, and his intercession, are of equal ex-

tent—That the gospel, strictly taken, only contains precious promises, and all precepts and threatenings belong to the law. That there is a free and unconditional grant or offer of Christ* made in the word to all sinners of mankind, wherever the gospel comes, without any regard to previous qualifications—That the surety righteousness of Christ is the true and proper condition of the covenant of grace, and not faith, repentance or sincerity—That saving faith is a persuasion wrought in the heart of a poor sinner by the Holy Spirit, and grounded on the gospel grant alone of Christ being indeed a Saviour, a Prophet, Priest and King, to him in particular†—That love

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* "This is the same with what is called 'deed of gift.' The deed of gift is the free and indiscriminate exhibition of the Saviour to mankind sinners, as such, or that which affords them an unexceptionable warrant to receive him by an appropriating faith. The phrase is very consonant to the word of God, as is evident from the following texts: 'Is it a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel? I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth: My Father gives you the true bread from heaven: This is the record of God, that he hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' The indiscriminate right which sinners have to Christ, not only signifies their warrant to receive him, but the general interest they have in him, as he is God in their nature, and *the* official *Saviour of the world*, in opposition to fallen angels, with respect to whom it cannot be said in any sense that he is their Saviour."—*Ass. Presbytery's answer to the 7th Question of the Committee of the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia*, 1770.

† The different sentiments of the Synod of Philadelphia and New-York, now the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in America, and the Associate Presbytery, may be seen in the New Castle Presbytery's Warning, published 1755; and Mr. Arnot's reply, in the second part of the Detection Detected; and Mr. Gellatly's observations: also in the answer of the Committee of the Synod, 1770, to the Associate Presbytery's second question. It is this: "Faith does not consist in an assent to the doctrines of the gospel exhibiting Christ in the character of a Saviour, as true, but formally, in the hearty approbation and consent of the will, whereby the sinner rolls over his guilty soul upon Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour, and rests upon his righteousness alone for his everlasting salvation." The Associate Presbytery, in the answer to the Committee's first question: "We are so far from believing that an assurance or persuasion of our having actually obtained a personal and saving interest in Christ, or of our being already in a state of grace, is essential to saving faith, that we constantly declare to the contrary. But we assert, with all orthodox Protestants, that faith includes an *appropriation* which amounts to a persuasion that he now conveys to us a distinguishing interest in himself, and that we shall be saved through grace, as it reigns through his everlasting righteousness. This persuasion we think is essential to faith considered as justifying, and in the relation it has to our own salvation as its final object: Though we do not affirm that it constantly triumphs in the minds of believers, who, through the prevalence of indwelling sin, and the intrusion of temptations, may want it for a considerable time. The commanding efficacy faith has upon the heart, when it is duly exercised, the joy and peace which spring from it, the expressive designations which are given to it in Scripture, the constitution of the gospel testimony, which is its immediate object, and the gospel call, which lays an obligation on sinners, not only to believe something concerning Christ, but to believe on him for something, even their own salvation, afford demonstrative evidence of the justness of this opinion. We presume this account of faith will be found upon strict trial to be more agreeable to the word of God and the excellent definitions of it in our Catechisms, and the ex-

to God, a principle of gratitude for redemption through Christ, and a regard to the glory of God, are the motives of obedience in the hearts of true believers, and not the hopes of heaven and the fears of hell—That the Lord will never leave nor forsake his Saints, so that they shall totally or finally fall away from a state of grace—That all saints are imperfect in the present state—That the punishment of the wicked will be for ever and ever—That a Confession of Faith is necessary for the well-being of the church, and every article of it should be a term of communion*—That public covenanting, or the public avowal of the truths and ways of God, with the solemnity of an oath, is both warranted by the word, in New Testament times, and seasonable at this time—That the Psalms of David are proper to be sung in worshipping assemblies, and in families, and not psalms or songs of human devising—That Presbyterial church government is the only form of government of divine institution—That the whole church ought to have (what the nature of presbyterial government requires) the same terms of church communion in all its particular congregations—That the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper ought to be both alike publicly administered and accompanied with the preaching of the word—That the revolutions which take place in the kingdoms of this world, or church members living under different civil governments, do not affect the unity of the church of Christ, and therefore there is no such thing as foreign jurisdiction in the church of Christ, of whom he says, " my dove, my undefiled, is but one"—That it is a dangerous principle to give up with these truths that are disputed among men esteemed pious and learned, and that an appearance of saintship alone,

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perience of true believers, to that given by the committee, who are pleased to tell us, that 'it formally consists in the hearty approbation and consent of the will;' which, though necessarily connected with faith, can not with propriety be called a believing in the name of the Son of God."

* "As a Confession of Faith exhibits what a church believe not only to be true, but also *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness,* and necessary to *make the man of God perfect, and to furnish him unto all good works,* it is very rational to think an approbation of all the principles therein held forth, should be insisted upon as a term of communion. The design of a Confession is defeated by the admission of persons to communion, upon terms utterly inconsistent with an earnest contending for the whole of the faith therein delivered. If we should dispense with one article in our Confession to show our charity to pious scruplers, we should for the same reason dispense with every article that in our variable opinion is not essential to it as a system, and consequently we may carry a dispensing power so high that our Confession will exhibit what few of us thoroughly believe, and serve only to demonstrate to mankind our inconsistency and insincerity in the matters of God." *Ass. Presbytery's answer to the 9th Question of the Committee of the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia,* 1770.

without a sound profession of the faith, and a gospel conversation, is all that is necessary for church-communion.

Thus, it is manifest, that each particular church communion exists for the sake of the tenets or principles for which it is distinguished from other church communions: for it is plain that there is no occasion for its existence in order to the maintaining of what it holds in common with other church communions. And the maintaining of such distinguishing tenets being the end of any particular church communion, the propagation of them must always be one end of its public administrations.* If these tenets be really errors, or instances of departure from the true faith, then the public administrations of such a church-communion are so far for the maintenance of error, and thus belong to the instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge. The precious truths that may be taught in such public administrations will no more hinder the propagation of some particular error from being a principal end of them, than the precious truths advanced in the discourses of Job's three friends hindered the support of their uncharitable judgment concerning him, from being the scope of those discourses.

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* Let none from hence conclude that the ministers and people belonging to the Associate Presbytery, judge that the administrations of those that are not of their communion, are invalid. The validity of ordinances is derived from their agreeableness to the word. The Lord will never bless any error or corruption in his church to promote her edification; but where there are many things wrong in churches the Lord has his servants and people, as was the case in the seven churches of Asia: These evils being reproved by the Lord, shows that the Lord is a strict observer of the state of matters in every church. After the reproofs and warnings given to the churches of Thyatira and Pergamos, if they did not reform, it was doubtless the duty of the people of the Lord, desirous to cleave to the Lord's cause, to separate from their communion. The Apostle in like manner reproves the corruptions and laxness that had tarnished the glory of the Corinthian church, but still he supposes persons may build on *the foundation, wood, hay and stubble*; and may be at great pains and expense to promote this building with *wood, hay, and stubble;* for which they shall suffer the loss of their pains in so doing: "but he himself will be saved, yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 12—16. It is a gross aspersion cast on us, that we think none will get to heaven but ourselves. Whoever will get to heaven it will be by Jesus Christ alone. Some say that the various religious professions are like the different ways to a city; but the fact is, that the way to heaven is one, and the Lord's people among the different denominations all travel one way, have one guide, and have communion with Christ only in the way of his truths. It would be blasphemy to suppose the Lord would bless any thing contrary to his blessed word, as a mean of edification to his church. But how far the Lord may bless the truths of his own word, or the ordinances of his appointment, though dispensed with many corruptions, would be presumption in any to determine. Eminent lights have appeared and shone forth among Independents and Episcopalians, but yet their defences of gospel truths, and their distinguished piety, do not make these different forms of religion any more agreeable to the word, but only show that *we know in part, and prophesy in part;* and that we ought to *call no man master, nor follow any man*, however learned or pious, farther than he *follows Christ*.

III. *We come now to offer some explanation of the duty of ceasing to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.*

This duty implies knowledge and care to distinguish good and wholesome instruction from that which is of dangerous tendency. So Christ says concerning his sheep: "My sheep know my voice; a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers."

As soon as we have sufficient ground to believe that it is the scope of any pretended instruction to cause us to err from the words of knowledge, we are to depart from it. It is not the way of Christ's sheep to countenance such instruction; for they know not the voice of strangers, and will flee from them. With respect to our private deportment, we are to beware of contracting private intimacies, and of frequenting unnecessarily the company of those from whom we expect to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge; for "evil communications corrupt good manners: and the companion of fools shall be destroyed."

With respect to our public deportment, we are to withdraw from those church-communions whose constitutions are founded on error and defection from the truth, and whose public administrations are thereto subservient.

What we chiefly intend on this head, is a particular consideration of the following question or case of conscience, namely, Whether the members of a church, which is in a state of separation from another church, may, without sin, occasionally attend on the administration of public ordinances in that other church?

In this question three things are supposed:

1. That the persons of whom we speak, are upon good grounds, persuaded that the church-communion from which they are in a state of separation, is so far chargeable, in her profession and obstinately continued practice, with the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge, as to render a state of separation from her warrantable, and, according to the circumstances of the case, necessary.

2. That they are in full communion with a church in the state of separation now supposed.

3. That the two churches are in a stated opposition to one another as to some articles of truth or duty, held by the one, and rejected by the other.

These things being supposed, we say, it is unwarrantable for church members to attend upon, or countenance the administration of public ordinances, in any church-communion

from which they are, on solid and scriptural grounds, in a state of separation. This we maintain for such reasons as the following:

1. The attendance of church-members, on public ordinances, in a church-communion from which they are in a state of separation, is directly contrary to the divine command in the text, and in other places of scripture. For, in the supposed case, the public administrations of such a church communion always carry in them instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge; it has been shown that they always proceed upon or imply such instruction. The practice in question is contrary to all those passages of scripture which enjoin us to beware not only of false doctrine, but of the teachers of it: And surely nothing can be more reasonable than to consider every public teacher as a teacher of all that error or corruption of which he is not ashamed to make a public profession; as he certainly does of whatever error or corruption is professed and justified by the church communion to which he belongs, especially when it is professed and justified in opposition to the truth maintained by another communion. We are enjoined to *mark such as cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and to avoid them.* Nothing is plainer than that they who teach such doctrine, and justify such corruptions, as render a state of separation necessary, are causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and are therefore to be avoided; that is, their public administrations are not to be countenanced by us, lest we be chargeable with countenancing their corrupt schemes, whereby they cause divisions and offences.

2. The attendance of church-members, on the dispensation of public ordinances, in a church-communion from which they are in a state of separation, is inconsistent with the weight and importance of a warrantable separation. When a particular church hates to be reformed; when its obstinacy, in rejecting some of the truths and institutions of our Lord Jesus, is come to such a height, that, in its communion, a suitable exercise of the keys with which Christ hath intrusted his ministers for the joint or judicial maintaining of those truths and institutions, is altogether impracticable; then separation at last becomes necessary. While any particular church, from which we are in a state of separation, continues obstinate in her defections, our state of separation from it ought to continue. In this case, the Lord says to us, as he said to Jeremiah, "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou

unto them." Hence it is manifest, that when a state of separation is warrantable, the church-communion from which we are separated, and that with which we join, can not be so much alike, that we can be either in the one or in the other indifferently with a safe conscience. On the contrary, the evil of rejecting the truths or institutions of our Lord Jesus, on account of which a just separation is stated, is so great, that we can not countenance those public administrations, which, according to our separation, have the maintaining of that evil for one part of their scope and design, without being chargeable with gross inconsistency and unfaithfulness to our own light. If a separation were warrantable, which is only on account of the greater convenience of attending on ordinances in the church that is in a state of separation, we might, then, notwithstanding such a separation, upon the absence of the ordinary pastor, attend on the ministry of one of another communion, though his gifts were not so agreeable, or his situation so convenient to us. But a separation of that sort would sacrifice the peace and unity of the church to private convenience and humor; would harden persons whose evil character, in Jude, 19. is, that they "separate themselves," and must be abhorred by every man of principle and conscience. But a warrantable separation is a quite different affair; the grounds of it are so weighty, as to render an occasional as well as a stated attendance on the public ordinances of the church-communion from which we are in a state of separation, quite unwarrantable.

3. An occasional attendance on public administrations in a church-communion from which we are in a state of separation, tends to subvert the order and discipline of the church of Christ. It can not be denied, that the errors and offences of those church-communions from which we are justly in a state of separation, are in their own nature, being open violations of God's law obstinately persisted in, sufficient grounds of church-censure: Nay, if the consciences of church-members who are in a state of separation on account of these errors and offences, be not exceedingly stupified, they must acknowledge that the ministers and people from whom a separation is thus justly stated, are, in effect, under the censure of the church by a scriptural testimony against them, and by a necessary separation from them. But how does the holy scripture direct us to behave towards those that are under church-censure? It certainly directs us to behave to them in such a manner as may be expressive of the sense we have of the evil of their ways; in such a manner as may

make them ashamed; in such a manner as is directly contrary to the countenance given to corrupt church-communions by our attending on their public administrations. "Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." (2 Thess. iii. 6, 14.) On the other hand, when we give public countenance to those who are the objects of church-censure, and behave towards them as if they were in full communion, we are attempting to defeat the design of the church's censure. The aim of church-censure is to bring church-members to a humbling sense and hearty renunciation of sin: but this conduct hardens them in it. Church-censure tends to inspire church-members with a sense of the heinousness of the evil for which it is inflicted; but this conduct leads them to consider it as a light and trivial matter. This conduct, therefore, manifestly tends to destroy all the use of church-censure: for if church-members allow themselves to trample upon it in one case, (in which, as in this, they can not with any consistency dispute the justice of it,) they must be ignorant indeed of human nature as well as of God's word, who can suppose that any due regard to it in other cases will be long maintained.

If it be excepted, that it seems improper for a particular church to censure such as are not in her communion: We answer, there are two ways in which a church may censure even those that are out of her communion. The first is, by a judicial and authoritative condemnation of their errors and corruptions. Thus Zion is to "condemn in judgment every tongue that riseth up against her." The second way is by the contrariety of her pure profession and holy practice to the profession and practice of others.

4. Occasional attendance on the public administrations in a church-communion, from which we are warrantably in a state of separation, does not comport with that watchfulness and jealousy over our own hearts, which are so suitable to our condition in the militant church. For these are ministrations in which, it is acknowledged by the persons we speak of, there is much of the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge; if not in what is actually delivered in their hearing, at least in the profession of religion which is made in such a church-communion, and to which all the public administrations there are in a designed subservience. Ma-

ny do not scruple to attend on the ministrations of false teachers, as apprehensive of no danger from them; for, say they, we are not so ignorant as not to know what is to be received as true, and what is to be rejected as false. To such we say, the Lord forbids you not only to believe the instruction that causeth to err, but even to hear it: he commands you to cease from giving even an outward attention to it: and therefore in your attendance thereon, you are manifestly going out of the Lord's way; you are trampling on his authority. And while you are doing so, your confidence that you shall not be seduced, is but a vain and presumptuous leaning on your own understanding, and running a greater risk than eating food mixed with poison. Whilst you are thus venturing out of the plain road of duty, you are in a great hazard of being left to follow the bent of your corrupted nature, and to embrace error instead of truth. You should consider that there is a hellish energy attending error, as well as a heavenly energy attending divine truth; for we read of the "working of Satan with all power and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." It is true, that, even when we have the best ground to expect a pure dispensation of word and ordinances, public speakers are not exempted from inadvertent and unguarded expressions. But we are to judge of a dispensation of ordinances in any church-communion by the scope and tendency of it: and of the scope and tendency of it, by the peculiar and distinguishing principles and avowed practice of the church-communion in which it is. And, according to our judgment thus formed, we ought or ought not to attend.

The needless reading of erroneous books, that is, of books which are well known to be intended and calculated for the propagation of gross error, is to be avoided. Yet there is a difference between the private reading of an erroneous book and attending on the administrations of an erroneous teacher: for, First, as it is more especially by the preaching of the word that church-members are converted and edified; so it is more especially by the preaching of error that they are seduced. Secondly, in the preaching of error there is a prostitution of the sacred office of the ministry, which is not in the mere proposal of opinions in common conversation or in books. Thirdly, it can not be pretended, that in the private reading of a book published by an erroneous teacher, there is any public countenance given to him in the character of a church-officer, or any sort of church-communion with his followers, as there certainly is in a public attendance on his min-

istrations. Fourthly, the private reading of books is of the nature of that private communication of sentiments to one another, which is previously necessary in order to a state of church-communion. Thus, reading is a proper mean of acquiring the information which is needful to determine us whether we ought to join in such a particular church communion or not: or whether we ought to attend on the public administrations thereof or not. If we find, in the use of this and other means, that we ought not to attend on them, we should, according to the opportunities of our place and station in the church, to warn others of the danger of attending on them. Hence the examination of erroneous books, when it is performed with honesty and judgment, is a real service to the church of Christ.

5. An occasional attendance on the public administrations from which we are justly in a state of separation, is contrary to the due exercise of charity towards our fellow church-members: for supposing (what we are far from allowing to be ever the case in fact) that a church-member had attained such a measure of knowledge and establishment in the truth, as to be in no danger of receiving hurt to his own soul, by his attendance on the public administrations of the erroneous; yet he can not but know that the weaker sort of his fellow church-members are in great danger, who may be emboldened to attend on the same administrations by his example. Is he not hereby chargeable with putting a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way? This is properly, in the scripture sense, giving offence to our brethren: for giving them offence, is not, as is commonly imagined, displeasing them, but rather being any way an occasion of their falling into sin. Besides, it is breaking the bonds of church-communion in vexing the hearts of our brethren, who rightly judge occasional hearing to be a sin, and inconsistent with our profession of Christ's name.

6. An occasional attendance on the public administrations in different and opposite church-communions, is contrary to the right manner of attending on gospel ordinances; which our Lord enjoins upon us, when he says, "Take heed how ye hear." For in the first place, this occasional attendance on ordinances is a self-contradictory attendance: for whoever attends on the public ordinances of God in any particular church, must be considered either as a mere spectator of the public exercises there, or as having communion with that church in them. But a mere spectator he can not be: because the public exercises of praying, praising, and hearing

the word, are of such a nature, that for a person to be present at them from choice, is to be under the highest obligation to join in them: a person that deliberately attends on such exercises as a mere spectator, is a profaner of God's name; and will find, sooner or later, that there is no such thing as being an unconcerned spectator of God's ordinances in the visible church. Whoever attends on the public ordinances of any particular church, must, therefore, be considered as having public communion with that church. Thus, in the supposed case, the person is involved in a contradiction. His attendance on the public ordinances of one particular church, says, he approves of the constitution and principles of that church; and that he is "one body, one bread," with the other members of it; but all this is contradicted by his attendance on the public ordinances of another church which is in a state of separation from the former. Nay, in the second place, is not this occasional attendance on the administrations of different churches a blasphemous attendance? In attending on public ordinances we profess to have come to hear what God the Lord shall say to us, by those whom he sends to speak to us in his name. But when we go to hear it declared to us according to the profession of one church, as what the Lord himself speaks to us, That Christ died for the elect only; and that Presbyterial church-government is the only form of it which Christ hath appointed in his word: and afterwards go to hear, as the Lord's message, according to the profession of another church, That Christ died for every individual of mankind; and that Independency or Episcopacy, or no particular form of church-government at all, are appointed in the word; is it not plain, that our attendance on public ordinances, in such opposite communions, is either a piece of solemn mockery, or a charging the Most High with contradictions? If we do not go to hear God speak what we know is to be spoken to us in his ordinances, our attendance is a blasphemous mockery; and if we do go to hear him speak, as is now represented, we blasphemously charge him with contradictions. In the third place, it is a partial attendance on ordinances. When persons, in the supposed case, attend on the public administrations of a church-communion from which they are in a state of separation, they are chargeable with putting asunder what God hath joined together; namely, the preaching of the word and the dispensation of the sacraments. Where will they find a divine warrant to receive one as authorized to preach the word to them, from whom it is unwarrantable to receive the sacraments; or to join in communion with a

particular church, in such public exercises of divine worship as prayer, praise, and hearing the word preached, while it is unwarrantable to join with the same church in baptism and the Lord's Supper? Paul appears to represent the public and authoritative dispensation of the word as the principal part of the trust that was committed to him as a minister of Christ: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." (1 Cor. i. 17.) "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. iii. 8.) It seems unwarrantable, therefore, to consider the preaching of the word as a less sacred or important part of the ministerial office than the dispensation of the sacraments. In the fourth place, this occasional attendance on the public administrations of different church-communions, is, from the nature of it, apt to be prostituted to carnal purposes. This sort of occasional attendance is not necessary to the enjoyment of the gospel and its ordinances in purity and simplicity; for these may be had in a steadfast adherence to one church-communion. But the great inducement to that sort of attendance is, that thereby men's vain curiosity, or fondness for something new in the gifts of a speaker, or in his manner of address, is gratified: on this account, men "heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Nay, persons are often induced to this attendance out of compliment to their friends or neighbors; or because, according to the atheistical temper of the present age, it is accounted a mark of liberality and enlargement of mind. In the fifth place, some give evidence that they make an idol of ordinances, by their attendance on them in church-communions, from which they are in a state of separation. This is the case of those who do not scruple to turn aside from the path of duty to what they can not deny to be sinful, for the sake, as they pretend, of the public ordinances. There are some who allow it to be an important duty to bear testimony, even in a way of separation, for reformation principles, in opposition to the corruptions or backslidings of those called Presbyterians, as well as to those of others. They also allow, (what indeed no considerate person can deny) that attendance on public ordinances, as dispensed by those that are in a stated opposition to that testimony, is inconsistent with a due maintenance of it, and that a practice, which carries in it that inconsistency, is sinful: and yet these very persons will allow themselves and families in this practice, confessedly sinful as it is. Their apology is to this purpose: That they are almost destitute of

ordinances dispensed under a testimony for truth, by reason of their great distance from the place where ministers are settled, and because they have seldom any supply of preaching in the way they desire to have it. To this we answer, by directing to such persons the following enquires:

1. Should it not be our end in attending on public ordinances, that we may not sin against God? But how can we pretend to do what is inconsistent with our holy profession, and therefore sinful, that we may not sin? Shall we dishonor God, that we may honor him? Shall we do evil, that good may come?

2. Can you be said to be destitute of ordinances while you have the Bible in your hands, and Catechisms, and other helps towards the right understanding of it, while you have daily opportunity of family worship, and of meditation and prayer in secret; and also of family catechising, and of family discipline? Is it not owing to negligence, or to formality and deadness in the use of these private means, that your families grow up in ignorance, and also that the Lord is provoked to withhold from you the enjoyment of public ordinances? For it is his ordinary way to grant more means and privileges to those who are diligent in improving those which they have.

3. Have you not had too little regard to the enjoyment of pure ordinances, in your removals from place to place? Have not the situations you have chosen for your families, been rather where they might get large worldly estates, than where they might have a prospect of obtaining the green pastures of public ordinances for their souls?

4. While you continue in the practice of an occasional attendance on the public administrations of church communions that are in a stated opposition to a seasonable testimony for the doctrine and order of the church of Christ, is not your adherence to that testimony thereby rendered doubtful and uncertain? Is not a steady and consistent adherence to that testimony the way to obtain the enjoyment of public ordinances under the banner of it? Without the study of the former, the desire of the latter must be but lukewarm, and the expectation of it groundless. For it is "the longing soul that the Lord will satisfy, and it is the hungry soul that he will fill with good."

It may be proper here to take notice of some other pleas, which are commonly offered for occasional attendance on the public administration of church-communions, from which we are in a state of separation.

1st. It is said, that such occasional attendance is according

to the apostle's exhortation, "Prove all things." (1 Thess. v. 31.)

We answer, 1. The occasional hearing against which we have been arguing, was all along supposed to be that of persons so far convinced of the corrupt state of the church whose administrations they occasionally attend, that they judge it necessary to be in a state of separation from it. This is a thing, therefore, which these persons are supposed to have already proved.

2. Nor is occasional hearing a proper way of coming at the knowledge of the peculiar principles of a particular church: for you may frequently hear the public discourses of its preachers, without ever getting any proper or satisfactory account of those principles. It would be unjust to lay every unguarded thing to the charge of a church which may fall from one of its public speakers: and on the other hand, it would be rash to conclude, that a church, as such, holds every article of divine truth that the public speakers of it may happen to utter.

3. To prove all things, in the sense of the apostle, is to bring every doctrine or practice to the touchstone of the written word. If you are duly exercised in doing so, you will pay a suitable regard to the other part of the exhortation, namely, *Hold fast that which is good:* you will take a decided part against whatever you find conformable to the infallible rule. You will not be ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth.

2dly. It is said, that the ministrations which are occasionally attended, are those of regular ministers of the gospel; those of a true church, in which, we have ground to believe, persons have communion with Jesus Christ the head.

In answer to this it might be sufficient to observe, that if it proved any thing, it would prove too much for the purpose of justifying those who attend on the public administrations of church-communions from which they are in a state of separation; for if we may warrantably attend on the administrations of such ministers occasionally, we may attend on them always, and we may receive the sacraments from them as well as the word, and then separation from them must be unnecessary; and if unnecessary, then unlawful. But as this plea is commonly in the mouths of those that plead for occasional hearing, it may be useful to introduce here a few observations of some valuable writers on this subject. "A secession," says a judicious divine,* "may be warrantably de-

* Wilson's Defence, page 69.

clared from a church on account of her coruptions and backslidings, when yet she is not unchurched. Though the dissenters in England and Ireland have stated a secession from the church of England, on account of her corruption in worship, government and discipline, they do not therefore, unchurch her; they do not refuse her the character and denomination of a Protestant church. Nay, they do not dispute that many have lived and died in communion with the church of England, through ignorance of her corruptions, and the sinfulness thereof, who have had communion with Christ."

To the observation of this divine, we may add, that, in the same manner, a minister of such a corrupt church may be called, in a large sense, a minister of the gospel; though as a minister of such a corrupt church, he be chargeable both with teaching false doctrine himself, and with holding communion with those who do so: and therefore when we withdraw from the communion of a corrupt church, we are of course, to withdraw from the public administrations of its ministers. "The primitive church," says CLAUDE, in his historical defence of the Reformation, "never had any union with such as taught false doctrine; and to shew how necessary and indispensable they judged a separation from them to be, they went so far as to refuse communion with the orthodox themselves, when either by surprize or weakness, or some interest, they had received heretics into their communion, although as to themselves they had kept their faith in purity. Thus the orthodox of the church of Rome refused to hold communion with Felix their bishop, because he held communion with the Arians, although he entirely held the creed of the council of Nice." We may add what DUPIN, in his Bibliotheca Auctorum Ecclesiasticorum, relates of HILARY, bishop of Poictiers. That pious man, having come to a synod that met at Selencia, in the year 359, did, at his first entrance into the Synod, make confession of his faith according to the decisions of the council of Nice; upon which he took his seat in the Synod. But soon observing that many of the bishops were Arians, he departed, and would not be any more present with them. It is to be observed, that the Synod admitted of this confession of his faith; yet he would have no church-communion, where Arians were sitting as members. This example is agreeable to the word of God, wherein we are forbidden to receive such as bring corrupt doctrine, or *to say a confederacy with them that say a confederacy.* But it is objected, that they are but small truths or omissions on account of which we are in a state of separation from some churches.

We answer, that the truths concerning Presbyterial church government being an ordinance of the Lord Christ, concerning public covenanting being the duty of the church under the New Testament, and seasonable at present, concerning the use of the scripture songs in our solemn worship, concerning the duty of the church, as such, to bear a suitable testimony against the errors and corruptions of the present times, are such as none will represent as small matters, but those that are ignorant of them. But even with respect to truths comparatively small, says Mr. Fleming, in the Fulfilling of the Scriptures, "They may be great in their season, when they are the word of Christ's patience. Nay the lesser a truth seems, and of mean value with many, it makes the Christian's adherence to it a greater testimony. It is clear, that so close a concatenation there is among the truths of God held forth in the scripture, that one part thereof cannot be reached without a special prejudice to the whole. Yea, it may be said, every corruption of the truth hath an aim at the very soul of religion, by a direct tendency thereto." With respect to omissions, such as omitting to censure the erroneous, to bear a particular testimony against the errors and corruption of the present times, or to comply with the call now given to set about reformation in the way of covenanting: We answer in the words of another divine; "Omissions," says he, "are so heinous and grievous in the sight of God, that when sentence is passed upon men at the great day, omissions only are mentioned, (Matth. xxv. 41, 42, &c.) *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat, &c.* Omissions may even turn the purest churches into synagogues of Satan. If the erroneous are not censured, and error is not condemned, a society professing to be a religious society may soon become a herd of blasphemous Arians and Socinians, and of wicked Arminians, and of the like gross perverters of the truth." But it is farther objected, that we refuse to have communion with those with whom the church's Head holds communion. We answer in the words of the same divine: "Though corruption and superstition can never have the approbation and countenance of heaven, it does not therefore follow, that when we depart from communion with a particular visible church on account of her corruptions, our separation is interpretatively a condemning of Christ the head of the church, as if he were to be blamed, if he, in his adorable sovereignty, communicate himself and his grace, even to those who remain in communion with a corrupt and degenerate church. The sovereignty of grace may be glorified a-

mong those whom it is not safe nor warrantable for us to hold communion with as members of the same ecclesiastic body. The hidden and secret communications of the Redeemer, are neither the standard nor rule of our duty."

Lastly, it is objected, that the scheme of putting a stop to the practice of occasional hearing, tends to widen the breaches among the various church-communions of Christians, which we should rather endeavor to heal.

Answ. There will be no genuine healing of breaches, till churches be brought to an humbling sense of their errors and defections, and to a sincere, unanimous, particular acknowledgement of the various articles of divine truth which they have injured, either by denying or refusing to own. In order to this healing, churches and their members must be brought under such deep concern to attain the true knowledge, and to walk in a steadfast adherence to it, as will cure them of the levity of occasional hearing. When the healing Spirit is poured from on high, each church-member will be saying, "Here are two opposite doctrines; they can not both be of God; for there is no inconsistency in him. I now see it to be a matter of infinite importance for me to have a certain knowledge of the truth which is of God. Nor will I rest till through the Lord's blessing on the use of the means, namely, searching the scriptures, communication with fellow church-members, meditation, and ardent prayer for the illumination of the Spirit, I attain a solid knowledge and full satisfaction as to this matter. And when I have thus bought the truth, that is, when the Lord has freely given me the understanding of it, I will make a consistent adherence to it in profession and practice, the study and the business of my life." When such a disposition becomes general among church-members, one might venture to say that the time of the church's healing is not far off; it would be a token of *the set time to favor Zion being come.* With respect to occasional hearers, they contribute no more to true peace between opposite church-communions, than whisperers and tale-bearers do to the reconciliation of two persons at variance. In both cases, they seldom or never fail to imbitter the parties against one another by their anecdotes and misrepresentations. If each church-communion were to declare with precision and particularity, what is unanimously held by them in every article wherein they differ from others; and if their members were required to evidence a steady adherence to every article thus declared, the good consequences would soon appear. For, in the first place, the misrepresentations of tale-bearers, otherwise called

occasional hearers, would no more obtain credit, the means of refuting them being always at hand. In the second place, church-communions would have more real esteem of one another in proportion as they evidenced themselves to be acting from principle. In the third place, seeing one another in earnest in maintaining their respective tenets, each would be led to consider the tenets of another with more seriousness, and to enquire with more diligence what truth or what error is in them: an enquiry which would be much less difficult, were every church-communion honestly and plainly to ascertain their distinguishing tenets by a public and particular declaration.

Since the grand apostacy in the papal church, there have been two most remarkable periods, wherein several churches gave suitable evidence of sincerity and earnestness in endeavoring to attain the knowledge and pure profession of the truth. The first was that of the glorious Reformation from Popery; when the Lord brought so many churches from the bosom of Antichrist with confessions of faith and testimonies to his truth in their hands. The second period was about the middle of the last century, when so resolute and successful a stand was made against superstition in the worship of God, and against the tyrannical government of Episcopacy. But the time of going forward in reformation was short, and was succeeded by a grievous defection from what had been attained. In the course of which defection, the Protestant churches as such, have fallen into great lukewarmness and indifference to the purity of their holy profession: which indifference has been excused and increased by the prevailing opinion of latitudinarianism:——Latitudinarianism, which makes religion consist sometimes in such emotions and passions as are excited by pictures and musical sound, sometimes in such mere outward morality as might be found in heathens, in any thing rather than in a single adherence to the truths revealed in God's word:—Latitudinarianism, which makes an attachment for any gross error or corruption which ever plagued the church of God, pass for great piety:—Latitudinarianism, which, in vast multitudes bearing the Christian denomination, is already ripened into open and avowed profanity, infidelity and atheism:—Latitudinarianism, an idol to which this generation seems to be so absolutely attached, that there is reason to apprehend that such a severe calamity will be necessary to wean them from it, as was necessary to wean the Jews from their idolatry. Let us hope and pray, that the blessed work which was begun in the Reformation from Pope-

ry, which was advanced in the Reformation from Prelacy, and which is still carried on amidst great and manifold opposition, may speedily issue in the more eminent glory of the latter day.

We conclude with an exhortation to those that are engaged in a professed adherence to a testimony for the principles of the first and second Reformation, against the various defections therefrom, in the present state of the visible church. We call you, in the Lord's name, to study a firm and consistent adherence to that testimony in profession and practice. The charge which the adversaries of Paul brought against him, and from which he vindicated himself, that his word towards the Corinthians was *yea and nay*, an affirmation and denial of the same thing, holds lamentably true against many professors at this day. One part of their conduct says, *yea*, they are adhering to a testimony for the truth; another part of it says, *nay*, they are making light of it. Be concerned that your adherence to the present truth may, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be *yea*, that is, steady and consistent. Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering. And that you may do so, we offer you the following advices.

1. Be careful to attain a competent knowledge of the several articles of the present truth and testimony of Jesus. Study to know these, not merely as contained in our subordinate standards, such as, our Judicial Testimony, our Catechisms and Confession of Faith, but also according to what the nature of these subordinate standards require, as contained in the scriptures of truth, which are the supreme standard, and the only foundation of a genuine faith. When adversaries represent our subordinate standards as turning away men's attention from the holy scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, they are propagating what, if they be acquainted with these standards, their own consciences must allow to be a base calumny, and an open shameless contradiction to the letter, and to the whole nature and design of such standards; they being nothing more than the declared adherence of the church, in the articles specified, to the word of God alone; and there being no other way conceivable in which the church, as such, can make a faithful opposition to the various errors and corruptions, according as they come to prevail. To fall in with the design of these subordinate standards, it is necessary for you to be like the Bereans, "searching the scriptures daily, whether these things be so."

2. Study to have distinct views of the testimony for truth,

to which you adhere, being the cause of God. It is his cause, because every article of revealed truth is a letter of his name; and the denial of it is an open contempt of his authority, and an impeachment of his veracity. It is this persuasion that must animate you to steadfastness in your holy profession, under all the changes of outward appearance; and to activity in the support of it in your several places and stations.

3. Let your attendance on gospel ordinances, while you have them in purity, be regular and exemplary. Carelessness in this respect is rebellion against the Lord's command, and evidences a criminal neglect of his declarative glory, and of the welfare both of the church and of your own precious and immortal souls. Be concerned that your frame of mind, on the calls you have to attend on public ordinances may be like that of David, as represented in the 122d Psalm, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

4. Beware of resting in any knowledge of the truth which is not saving and experimental, and which has not a sanctifying effect on the heart and life. The truth, received into the heart by faith and love, is a root and principle of holy obedience, according to Ephes. iv. 21, 22, 23, 24. "If so be that ye have heard him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

5. Continue in the exercise of faith and of prayer. Remember that ye owe all your steadfastness to the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. The more steadfast your views of him, whose name is the Lord our Righteousness, you will be the more steadfast in your holy profession. Behold your strength and standing to be not in yourselves, but in Him. And if ye would have faith exercised, evidenced or increased, be much in prayer. "Come boldly to the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help you in the time of need;" that ye may join with the people of God in all ages, in saying, "A glorious high throne, from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. DAVID GOODWILLIE.

The Rev. David Goodwillie was born near Fife-shire, Scotland, in the beginning of the year 1749. He received his academical education in Edinburgh, where he also studied Theology. He was licensed to preach the gospel in the fall of 1778. He was employed, preaching as a probationer, in Scotland, England and Ireland, during a period of ten years. In the spring of 1788, he emigrated to the United States of America, and formed an important and seasonable acquisition to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, then much in need of help. For although the members of the Presbytery had then increased to six, yet the congregations and applications to the Presbytery had been increasing in a still greater ratio. Many of those, who had been carried away by the fair promises of those who formed that union, which gave rise to the Associate Reformed body in 1782, not finding their expectations realized, were now returning to their former profession; and many from Europe, who had been acquainted with the principles professed by the Associate Church in Great Britain, were also making application to the Presbytery, from different and far distant sections of this widely extended country. In order that Mr. Goodwillie might be qualified to discharge all the parts of the office of a gospel minister, in the newly organized congregations among which he was now called to labor, the Presbytery judged it expedient to take him on trial for ordination, as early as convenient, after his arrival. Accordingly, we find he was ordained in the city of Philadelphia to the office of the holy ministry, on the 31st day of October, in the same year he arrived. Mr. Beveridge preached on the occasion. The discourse is inserted in this collection.

For about one year after his ordination, he was employed in preaching in various places in the States of Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York. But it was not long until a door, in divine providence, was opened for the stated exercise of Mr. Goodwillie's labors, as far as the general interests of the church would permit. In the latter part of the year 1789, he visited Caledonia County, Vermont, where a promising society was collecting, chiefly of emigrants from Scotland. On the 5th of July, 1790, he was regularly and unanimously called to become the stated pastor of the Associate congregation of Barnet, Caledonia County, Vermont, in which call, a few families from the adjoining town, Ryegate, also united and received a portion of Mr. Goodwillie's pastoral labors. Which call being regularly presented and accepted, he was admitted to the pastoral charge of the congregation of Barnet on the 8th of February, 1791, according to the rules and usages of the Presbytery, but he continued to devote a portion of his labors to Ryegate, until that congregation obtained a pastor to themselves in 1822. Among these people he labored nearly forty years. He died August the 2d, 1830, in the 81st year of his age, having preached the everlasting gospel nearly fifty-two years. His remains lie in the church-yard of the Associate congregation of Barnet, according to his own request, beside those of his highly esteemed friend and brother in Christ, the Rev. Thomas Beveridge. When Mr. Goodwillie settled in Barnet, the country was new; with a single exception, it is believed that there was not a settled minister of any denomination within sixty miles of him.

While this circumstance greatly increased the labors of his charge, it also gave him an opportunity of an extensive field in which to sow the good seed of the word of life. And Mr. Goodwillie seemed in every respect well qualified for that station in the church, in which an all-wise Providence placed him; blessed with a good physical constitution, he endured the toils and fatigues to which his situation exposed him, without inconvenience: and was enabled to continue his labors almost without interruption, to the close of his long life. His mental endowments were not less suitable to the station which he occupied, than those of his body. Though not distinguished by that brilliancy of mind, which many call genius, he was endowed with a clear and sound judgment, an accurate discernment, with much prudence and a large portion of that useful and happy talent of discerning and conducting himself according to the laws of propriety, which is usually called common sense. Hence he was often consulted by all

classes, in any emergencies or difficulties in which they might be involved. As an evidence of the confidence which his townsmen and neighbors reposed in his judgment, he was often called to the discharge of such civil offices as least interfered with his duties to the congregation. He was chosen to represent the town of Barnet in the Legislature of the State, while that body held its session in Danville, distant but a short distance from his residence. He possessed a peculiarly cheerful disposition, and was enabled to preserve great equanimity under circumstances either of prosperity or adversity. And it was remarked by the most intelligent and religious of his people, that he uniformly appeared most cheerful in preaching, when under trouble, whether of a domestic or public nature. Although as a preacher or public speaker, his talents were not of the most popular kind they were certainly of a kind well suited to render him very useful and highly acceptable to the people among whom he labored so long. He urged the plain truths of the gospel, in a plain but an affectionate manner. His aim, in his public ministrations, was evidently to commend Christ and the way of salvation to perishing sinners, not to set forth himself as an aspirant after the praises of men.

Mr. Goodwillie was married in Philadelphia, shortly after his arrival in this country, to a native of Kircaldy, Scotland, whose name was Beatrice Henderson, a woman well qualified to be a help-mate to him, in things both temporal and spiritual. She took a deep interest in the concerns of the church; and if any trouble arose in the congregation, it was their usual practice to set apart a day for fasting, humiliation and prayer in private, a practice highly worthy of imitation. Those of her friends who had the best opportunity of knowing her habits, represent her as a woman conscientiously careful in the discharge of all known duties, much devoted to prayer, and greatly enriched in christian experience. She died Feb. 4th, 1827, three years and a half before her husband.

Their family consisted of four sons and as many daughters. A son and a daughter died in early youth, on the same day and of the same epidemic with each other, and only a few days before the death of Mr. Beveridge, as noticed in the sketch of his life. Two of his daughters were married, the one to the Rev. A. Bullions, D. D., and the other to the Rev. John Donaldson, at that time ministers of the Associate Church, but both these women are now deceased. Two of his sons entered the ministry, and were both licensed to preach the gospel, by the Presbytery of Cambridge, their father presi-

ding as Moderator, Sept. 29, 1823. One of whom was called, as assistant pastor and successor to his father, Sept. 27, 1826, nearly four years before his father's decease. The other is settled near the line between Pennsylvania and Ohio. A single daughter, and a son besides the two in the ministry mentioned above, survive their father.

From a diary, kept by his son Thomas, who was his colleague during his last illness, now before the writer of this notice, Mr. Goodwillie appears to have closed his labors, as might have been expected from his life. He had lived the life of the righteous, and his "latter end was like his."

[The facts respecting Mr. Goodwillie, stated in the above sketch, were furnished by his son and successor, the Rev. Thomas Goodwillie.]

SERMON,

BY THE REV. DAVID GOODWILLIE.

"Let Israel now say that his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalm cxviii. 2.)

Man was made to praise his Maker. This was his delightful employment while he remained in the primitive state of innocence and integrity, in which he was created. But by the fall, he became entirely unfit for such a holy and happy exercise. By sin, he became wholly averse to sing the high praises of his almighty Maker and bountiful and constant Preserver. But when man is renewed by the grace of God, he enjoys a holy pleasure in the blessed employment of praising the God of his salvation. A proper view of man's fallen state of sin and misery affords the most dismal prospect: a knowledge and conviction of the nature and demerit of sin, presents us with condemnation and wrath. Judgment without mercy, is the just but righteous reward of iniquity. Instead of the saints' joyful song of praise, there awaits the sinner "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" forever; thence the wretched sinner is led to conclude, that "God's mercy is clean gone forever" and that "he will be favorable no more." In these dismal circumstances, to hear of divine mercy, the plentitude and perpetuity of that mercy in behalf of the miserable, and the certainty and happiness of its enjoyment to the praise of divine grace, must be most truly wonderful and highly comfortable. But such is the happy prospect presented in our text.

It is probable that David wrote this psalm after the conquest of his enemies was completed, when he was firmly established in the kingdom of all Israel, and had brought up the ark of God to Jerusalem, his royal city. But it is evident that it respects the Messiah, of whom the royal psalmist was an eminent type. Our Lord interprets the 22d verse, and ap-

plies it to himself as the Head-stone of the corner, which was rejected by the Jewish builders, (Matt. xxi. 42.) The apostle Peter makes the same application, (Acts iv. 11.) And the Jews themselves applied the 26th verse to Christ, when they sang joyfully at his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, as the condescending King of Zion, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." (Matt. xxi. 9.) The psalmist earnestly calls upon the friends of God and religion, to join him not only in a hearty acknowledgment of God's goodness, and a cheerful confidence in his mercy in future; but in a believing expectation of the "sure mercies of David"—The mercy promised to our fathers.

In prosecuting this interesting subject through divine assistance, we shall consider—

I. The declaration of the perpetuity of divine mercy.

II. The call or injunction to celebrate the perpetuity of divine mercy. "Let Israel now say," &c.

1. We are to consider the declaration here made, "His mercy endureth forever."

The term *mercy* is used in various senses in scripture. Human mercy is that kind disposition of mind and tenderness of heart, that compassionates the misery of others, and disposes to contribute to the relief of the distressed. Thus the good Samaritan had mercy or compassion, upon the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and left him half dead.

But mercy is not in God as it is in men, a mere passion or affection, for this would be incompatible with the purity, perfection, independence and immutability of the Godhead. When mercy is attributed to God, it denotes his infinite benignity and goodness, and in the strictest sense it denotes his free good-will and eternal purpose of making some of the fallen race of man both holy and happy, delivering them from the guilt, defilement and dominion of sin, and communicating himself to them in such a manner as is consistent with his own inviolable holiness, justice and truth. Mercy always supposes misery as its object. The mercy of God is his goodness to the miserable. This mercy of God is twofold. 1. A general mercy or common goodness, which he manifests to all both good and bad. "He maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. v. 45.) "He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil." (Luke vi. 35.) 2. His special saving

grace, love and favor, which he manifests only to his elect. This special saving grace, and everlasting love and favor, is bestowed only on "the vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory." And this special mercy is displayed in a special manner by God, as the God of all grace only in Christ. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." This special mercy is used in scripture to comprehend all the blessings of grace in time, and all the blessings of glory in eternity. Common mercies enjoyed by all mankind, both good and bad, are no evidences of God's saving grace and everlasting glory. They deserve our gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise, but still they will perish and decay, and leave those who receive and enjoy them, miserable at last. But special and saving mercies are everlasting in their duration, and will make those who possess and enjoy them, most happy forever. "Let Israel now say that his mercy endureth forever."

This declaration implies

1. That the *sin-pardoning mercy of God* endures forever. "Thou pardonest their iniquity because thou delightest in mercy." (Micah vii. 18.) The sin-pardoning mercy of God flows to the sinner through the shed blood of Christ, in whom God is always well pleased. The merit of Christ's sacrifice for sin is infinite in value, and everlasting in its effects. Hence we conclude that God's rich mercy in pardoning sin, through the infinite value and everlasting virtue of Christ's blood, will endure forever. The sentence of justification can never be revoked. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Christ Jesus our Lord."

2. *Sanctifying mercy.* This gracious mercy is effectually bestowed by the eternal Spirit, the everlasting fountain of divine and saving influences. He commences the gracious and holy change in the washing of regeneration. By his constant influence, conformity to the image of God is gradually increased, until sanctity is consummated at death. "According to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Tit. iii. 5, 6.) The happy effect of sanctifying mercy will be felt and enjoyed by the saints of God to all eternity. They will have eternal cause to magnify the sanctifying mercy of God, having been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

3. *Saving and delivering mercy.* This, the whole church as well as individual believers, have had ample cause to celebrate in all ages of the world. When they have been brought low by their own sin and by the oppression of their enemies, he stretches out his strong hand and holy arm, and grants them a merciful deliverance. Their provocations are many and great, and continual backsliding prevents for a time the deliverance, but sovereign mercy always prevails. God in his great mercy delivered his people from Egyptian bondage, from Babylonish captivity, and from Persian and Grecian oppression. And under the present dispensation he has cast out the great dragon, and in a great measure broken the power of the antichristian beast. And he will at last accomplish a complete and eternal deliverance for his church and people, from all their enemies and troubles, from the power of the second death, and the wrath to come; and make them everlasting monuments of his redeeming mercy. "O give thanks unto the Lord, who remembered us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth forever; and hath redeemed us from our enemies; for his mercy endureth forever." (Psalm cxxxvi. 23, 24.) "He that is mighty hath done great things, and holy is his name, and his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation." (Luke i. 49.

4. *Quickening and reviving mercy.* This the church and people of God often need, as they are often sunk into a lukewarm and lifeless condition. Hence David prays, "Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word. Quicken me according to thy loving kindness." And also the church prays, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years,—in wrath remember mercy." "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." "Quicken us and we will call upon thy name." And in answer to these prayers, God, in the multitude of his tender mercies sends out his word and spirit, and grants them "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Then his people sing with life and vigor, "that his mercy endureth forever."

5. *Strengthening mercy.* When the Lord's people see that their strength is gone, and no help left, then they are to place their hope in God, "the glory of their help." A due sense of their weakness leads them to the mercy of God, in whom is everlasting strength, and righteousness. And when they cry unto him for help, he answers, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." "I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and

down in my name." Then they go from strength to strength praising the perpetuity of God's mercy.

6. *Comforting mercy.* Divine mercy is a sovereign remedy for man's misery. It is a cheering cordial to a distressed soul. A gracious experience of the strong and everlasting consolation of which the apostle speaks, outweighs all the troubles of this life, and enables the saint to "glory in his tribulations." In the midst of his troubles, he can sing with the psalmist, "I will be glad in thy mercy." The God of all comfort says to his distressed church, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

7. *Directing mercy.* This keeps them in a way of duty, and in the path of life and salvation. Moses celebrates this mercy in his triumphant song, occasioned by their deliverance out of Egypt, "Thou in thy mercy leddest forth the people whom thou hast redeemed." God promises to every true believer, "I will guide thee with mine eye." So that the saint may say, with confidence, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

8. *Establishing and preserving mercy.* This David celebrates in thanksgiving before the Lord, when he proposed to build him a temple. "Thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee forever." "This great goodness hast thou promised." And when God acquaints him with the stability of his throne, he says to him, "My mercy will I not take from him." Hence the Psalmist prays, "Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord, let thy loving kindness and thy truth preserve me continually." "He shall abide before God forever: O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him." And hence the apostle prays that the God of peace would preserve blameless the whole spirit, soul and body of the saints, until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely nothing but the ever-enduring mercy of God could preserve them from all evil, unto eternal life in heaven.

In a word, this gracious declaration includes *all new covenant mercies.* The covenant itself is "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Its Head was set up forever, and his righteousness is everlasting; and all the mercies of the covenant are most sure and firm forever.

God is eternally and immutably good and merciful in

himself. He is an everlasting fountain of mercy, from which flows a never-failing stream into "the vessels of mercy," chosen from all eternity to be the everlasting monuments of divine grace. We are to bless God, both because he is good and doeth good. We must praise the Lord, because he is essentially good and merciful, and because his mercy towards his church and people endures forever. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him." (Ps. ciii. 17.) It is *from* "everlasting" in the eternal councils of peace, in their election to eternal life, before the foundation of the world; and it is *to* "everlasting" in its endless consequences, in their eternal glorification, when the world shall be no more. They must run up the never-failing stream of mercy to its never-failing fountain in the eternal God; and they must praise God, not only for the mercy which they experience on earth, but for that which they hope to enjoy in the felicity and glory of heaven forever.

In Psalm cxxxvi, the perpetuity of divine mercy is peculiarly celebrated and repeatedly declared; twenty-six times in that Psalm it is said, "His mercy endureth forever." The repetition of this weighty sentence intimates, that God's mercies are repeated, perpetuated and multiplied, from first to last, with an endless progress and advancement. It implies, that in every particular blessing, we ought to take notice of the mercy of God, and observe that it endures still the same now that it always has been, and ever will be. It also implies, that the everlasting continuance of God's mercy is highly honorable to him, and it is that in which he glories: and also that its perpetuity is most comfortable to the saints, and that it is their duty, and a precious and pleasant privilege, to rejoice and glory in it. Their hearts should be so enraptured with God's everlasting mercy, that the frequent mention of its praise should not cloy on their tongues, but raise them to a higher note in singing their chorus of the spiritual song of the redeemed, in which they will ever be praising God for the plentitude and perpetuity of his mercy. This most excellent sentence God has magnified above all other truths revealed concerning himself—not only by the frequent repetition of it in his word, but by the signal tokens of his acceptance, when it was sung to his honor and praise. At the dedication of the temple which Solomon built, they sang praise unto the Lord, saying, "For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever:" then "the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud," in token of his presence and acceptance. (Chron. ii. 5–13.) And in Jehoshaphat's time, when they began to sing

and "praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever." God granted Israel victory over their enemies. Let these things encourage us to sing—"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he his good; for his mercy endureth forever."

II. The call or injunction to celebrate the perpetuity of God's mercy: "Let Israel now say," &c.

The royal Psalmist, who was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ, calls upon "Israel," the ancient people of God by external federal relation, to praise God's eternal mercy. This duty is still binding upon the church of God. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy; and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. vi. 16.)

This call or injunction implies,

1. *A natural aversion and incapacity* to celebrate the everlasting mercy of God. "The dead can not praise him," and such is our natural condition. We are devoid of spiritual life, hope and desire. In order to stir us up to this blessed exercise, there is need of divine power to accompany the divine call, to quicken and incline us to make the declaration. The inward and effectual call of grace and Spirit of God, must attend the outward call and command of his word, to enable and dispose us to sing and say, that "his mercy endureth forever."

2. A *divine warrant* to praise the eternal mercy of God. Had not God of his infinite love provided a way for the free vent of his rich mercy, and proclaimed it to mankind, they would have been forever silent in his praise, nay, so far would they have been from presuming to praise him, that they never would have thought of it. Our warrant to celebrate his infinite mercy is not founded on any natural claim, but on his supreme authority requiring it in his word, which contains both the reason and rule of our duty.

3. *Sufficient grounds* for celebrating God's everlasting mercy. Although the will of God revealed in his word, without any other reason perceptible by us, is a sufficient warrant to perform any duty: yet, in divine revelation, there are many grounds set before us, as so many motives and inducements to praise the perpetual mercy of God: Such as the eternal love of God, the fountain head of mercy—the glorious undertaking of Christ, through whom alone the mercy is displayed to mankind sinners:—his incarnation—finished work—triumphant resurrection—and prevailing intercession forever:—the propagation of the gospel among the Gentiles—security for its success till all the elect vessels of mercy are filled with the glory of God:—and finally, the continual love

and care he has manifested towards his church and people, both in the ordinances of his grace and the dispensations of his Providence. "Through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us."

4. *Peculiar obligation* to praise God for his mercy. Israel, the professed people of God, standing in covenant relation to him, and the special object of his choice, love and care, are here called on to celebrate divine mercy. As the ancient Israel were under peculiar obligations to praise God's mercy, which was displayed in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage—preservation and support in the wilderness, entrance into Canaan, and peaceful possession and enjoyment of the promised land, with all the mercies which attended their lot, more particularly enumerated in Psalm cxxxvi: So the spiritual Israel of God, his peculiar people and treasure, are under special obligations to praise the eternal mercy of God, for this life, with its innumerable mercies and benefits which they possess and enjoy on earth, and for the promise and prospect of the eternal life of glory in heaven.

5. *Eminent seasons* for praising divine mercy. As it is continually exercised towards us, it ought always to be praised. But sometimes it is more evident in its blessed effects—and then we are more loudly called to celebrate it. How loudly did Moses and the children of Israel celebrate the praises of divine mercy at the Red Sea, when God delivered them from Egyptian bondage and the wrath of its cruel kings! The call in the text seems to be given to Israel when they were brought to a happy condition, having obtained many signal victories over their enemies, and had the good prospect of a peaceable and comfortable possession and enjoyment of the promised land. And the New Testament Church has experienced remarkable seasons of grace and mercy, deserving and demanding the liveliest glow of gratitude and praise; such as the extensive spread of the gospel among the Gentiles nations, and the renewal of divine truth and godliness at the Reformation—and every true believer has visits of divine grace and mercy at particular times, which will loudly call upon his soul, and all that is within him, to bless the Lord.

6. *Special faith* in God's everlasting mercy. When called to make this declaration, we are called at the same time upon the authority of God, to believe it, with particular application to ourselves. We can not properly comply with this call or injunction, till we can say in faith, "without which it is impossible to please God," "that his mercy endureth forever."

We are therefore, when making this declaration, to look for the blessed experience of divine mercy. In the appropriation and assurance of faith say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and my dwelling place shall be in the house of the Lord forever."

CONCLUSION.

1. Trust and hope in God's mercy which endureth forever. Mercy is the hope and refuge of a miserable sinner. The gospel is revealed for the express purpose that he may cast himself upon God's mercy, and hope in it continually for eternal life and salvation. Christ is the mercy of mercies, and all special saving mercy flows from his merits and mediation to poor perishing sinners. In him we are to "look for the mercy of the Lord unto eternal life." (Jude 21.) Israel and Aaron, and all that fear the Lord, are called upon to trust in the Lord, as their help and their shield. (Ps. cxv. 9—11. Here the very same persons are called upon to confess that the Lord's mercy endureth forever. None can praise God but those who trust and hope in his mercy. The Psalmist says, "I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever." "He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

2. Be glad and rejoice in the plenitude and perpetuity of God's mercy. Why is mercy shewn to the miserable but to make them happy, yea, joyful? Divine grace can gladden the most sorrowful heart, and make it sing "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." In trouble we imagine we get relief by complaining; but we get joy and gladness in praising God's mercy. Let our complaints be turned into praises, and draw all our comfort and consolation from the mercy of God in Christ. We must sing a praising song for God's glory, and a pleasant song for our own solace and delight. To rejoice always in the Lord is the believer's duty, privilege and delight. It may be difficult to reconcile dark and distressing dispensations of God's providence, but we must still believe that his mercy is everlasting, and his truth and faithfulness inviolable. It is matter of joy and praise that he will make all things, although apparently against us, to "work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose." If it is a day of darkness and distress, we are to "sing of mercy and judgment." But whatever be our circumstances, we are never so earnestly and frequently called upon in scrip-

ture to believe and repent, as to sing praise and give thanks; for it is the will of God that we should be most frequently and devoutly engaged in the most pleasant exercises of religion, which will be the eternal employment of the redeemed in heaven. David says, "I will glorify thee, O Lord, my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore." "For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord because he hath dealt bountifully with me." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name—who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies."

3. Praise God's mercy continually. Through Christ "let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." This was the Psalmist's noble resolution when he said, "I will bless the Lord continually, his praise shall be continually in my mouth." "I will sing of the mercies of the lord forever. For I have said mercy shall be built up forever." We may be ever singing the praises of God's mercy, and yet the subject will never be exhausted. O what a delightful exercise! What a blessed employment! The song of the Lamb will never cloy upon the lips of the Redeemed. With unwearied vigor, and with everlasting delight, will they praise the rich mercy of God. This will be the burden of their song, and the sum and substance of their hosanna and hallelujah, "That his mercy endureth forever."

We exhort you, O believer, to get your heart tuned to that song of praise which shall be sung with extatic joy in heaven forever. Neglect not the praise of God's mercy in the dark day of adversity. Be not like the rebellious Israelites, who "remembered not the multitude of his mercies," while they were miraculously preserved by him in the wilderness. Maintain upon your heart a grateful remembrance of the Lord's loving-kindness and tender mercies to you, and the Israel of God. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Let not your frailty and afflictions infringe upon your spiritual joy and prosperity. Death itself will be no abridgment of your bliss. Let not your heart be disquieted with your mortality, the shortness of life, and the frailty and troubles that attend it; for God's mercy to your immortal soul "endureth forever." "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow

to anger and plenteous in mercy.—As a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more: But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them." In faith and hope say with the Psalmist, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

O sinner—by faith seek a saving interest in the special mercy of God. Beware of trusting to the common goodness or general mercy of God, which you, like multitudes of others, may experience and yet perish forever. The rich man rioted in the good things of this life, but he died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in eternal torments. If you have no interest in the special mercy of the Lord, nothing awaits you but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth forever. Look by faith to God in Christ, who is the glorious channel of God's everlasting mercy to miserable sinners. He is gracious, merciful and propitious to sinners, only in the infinite merits of the sacrifice of his eternal Son. Through his shed blood, grace and mercy flow to us as miserable sinners. Cry mightily to the "Father of mercies," that he would have mercy upon your immortal soul. Pray with the poor penitent publican, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner." Look by faith for the mercy of the Lord unto eternal life, through the merits of Christ's righteousness. Wait upon the Lord, who waits to be gracious, and is exalted that he may have mercy upon you. Amen.

SERMON,

BY THE REV. DAVID GOODWILLIE.

"The mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." (Col. i. 26.)

Every part of supernatural revelation is characteristic of its Divine Author. In nothing is it inferior to what might reasonably be expected, in the circumstances in which it was made. The change of man's condition from a happy state of innocence and integrity, in which he was made by God, to a wretched state of guilt and woe, must necessarily be attended with the most dreadful consequences. A proper apprehension of the sin and misery of this state, induced by the fall, must be alarming beyond expression. But to hear of a holy and happy change, which more than counterbalances our loss by the fall, is truly wonderful and astonishing, both in its nature and manner of revelation. It is, as the Apostle styles it, a "mystery," which, though in a great measure it was hid from ages and generations, is now made manifest to the saints under a clearer dispensation of divine grace.

Through divine assistance we shall consider,

I. The gospel as a "mystery," in its origin, nature, design and effects;

II. That it preserves the nature of a mystery in every period and degree of its revelation.

I. We are to consider the gospel as a "mystery."

By a mystery, in scripture, is understood something of importance, which remains secret or unknown, in a great measure, or for some time. That is a mystery which in some respects lies hid or concealed from the common observation of mankind, so that they can have only dark and imperfect views of it, whether this darkness and imperfection arise from the nature of the thing itself, or from some obscurity in the

manner of revealing it. It is in this view that the apostle applies the word mystery, in this passage, to the word of God, the gospel of our salvation—"I am made a minister, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery," &c. The gospel is mysterious in every point of view, whether we consider it as entirely hid till revealed by God, or so wonderful in itself, that it exceeds the comprehension of finite minds. When it is asserted that the gospel is a mystery, there is nothing advanced inconsistent either with the nature of things, or the method God must be allowed to take in the extraordinary dispensations of his grace. For the method of salvation through Christ, which never could have been discovered by finite wisdom, or accomplished by created power, must be allowed to be entirely above and beyond the compass of reason and nature, or in other words, it must be entirely supernatural. It can not therefore be objected to the plan of redemption through Christ, that it is unreasonable, because it is above the sphere of carnal reason.

The gospel is mysterious—

1. In its *origin*. It took its rise in the everlasting love of God. The apostle emphatically pronounces it "the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself." This love or good will of God passes all understanding, and is mysterious both in itself and in its gracious and blessed effects. The manner of its egress in the council of peace is entirely inexplicable. There first appeared "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Its mysterious origin was hid from all eternity, and was not manifested until man had fallen.

2. In its *nature*. The gospel, strictly taken as the word implies, is the good news, or glad tidings of salvation. It is a declaration or manifestation of God in his gracious character, as the God of salvation. In it he invites and encourages sinners to partake of all those blessings which will render their happiness complete and their salvation eternal. But in order to this is necessary a competent knowledge of our fallen estate of sin and misery—of a future state of eternal happiness or woe—of the holy nature and gracious character and will of God—and of that redemption and salvation which is in Jesus Christ for sinners. But these things can be known only by divine and supernatural revelation. The gospel in its greatest extent comprehends the whole of God's word, and is an exhibition of the doctrines of grace, which are mysterious in their very nature, and therefore called the "mystery

of faith," because they are received only by faith, and the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," because they are discovered in God's kingdom of grace and glory, and the belief of them makes men heirs of that "kingdom which God hath promised to them who love him." It can not properly be said of what is called a mystery, that when it is revealed it is no longer mysterious. Thus the mystery of Christ's incarnation is revealed; but still the apostle affirms, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." The mystical union of Christ and his people is revealed; but still the apostle says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." The word "mystery" sometimes in scripture points out the truth and existence of things revealed, but which, as to the manner of their existence and degree of their essential perfection and excellence, are still unknown. Not wholly because human wisdom could never have discovered them, had not God graciously revealed them, but because even when they are revealed, human reason can not of itself apprehend nor comprehend them; and because those to whom they are made known, not only by the external revelation of God's word, but by the saving illumination of the Spirit, discerning the truth, beauty and glory of them, still have very dark and imperfect views of these mysterious doctrines. They are still unable to comprehend the manner of their existence, and unable to answer all objections and solve all difficulties concerning them. These doctrines, to the "natural man" are in every sense of the word, mysteries; so that though they are externally revealed to him in God's word, he counts them foolishness. And even to those to whom it is given to know the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," they still remain in a great measure mysterious, and command their study, wonder and admiration.

3. In its *design*. The gospel was designed to display the glory of God's gracious, merciful, covenant character, as the "Father of mercies" and "God of salvation." Its grand object was to show how illustriously all the divine attributes and perfections harmonize and shine, in the eternal salvation of mankind sinners in Jesus Christ. The way of reconciliation to God is entirely above and beyond the capacity of human reason, and therefore must appear mysterious. Reason is insufficient to point out any way of redemption that is perfectly consistent with all the attributes of God.

Again, the second and subordinate design of the gospel is to bring sinners into a saving union with the Son of God. "This is a great mystery," says Paul; but I speak concern-

ing Christ and the Church." Its design is to make them holy, in a gracious conformity to the image of God, and similarity (of likeness) to Christ; who is the first-born among many brethren. Hence they are said to be "partakers of the divine nature," and "partakers of his holiness." And finally, the design of the gospel is to bring miserable sinners to perfect and eternal happiness in the enjoyment of the glory of God in Christ forever.

For to obtain these grand designs, the gospel, when rightly preached, displays the riches of the divine grace in such a manner, that saving faith may by means of it be produced and promoted in the soul, and so the sinner is saved unto eternal life. "God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." Thus the mystery and design of God will be finished in the glory of his rich grace and eternal salvation of perishing sinners.

4. In its *effects*. The very different, yea, opposite effects which the gospel produces upon different persons, can not be accounted for satisfactorily on the principles of human reason. To some it is the "savor of life unto life," and to others the "savor of death unto death," and yet the natural condition of both is the same. These different effects must be attributed to some supernatural cause. It must be resolved into the "mystery of God's will," the divine sovereignty, in "the vessels of mercy" to the praise of his grace and mercy; and in the vessels of wrath to the praise of his eternal justice and immutable holiness. In the case of those who believe the gospel to the salvation of their immortal souls, the manner of its operation is mysterious. Our Saviour, speaking of the saving change that takes place in regeneration by means of the gospel, speaks of it as mysterious. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The child of God may say, "herein is a marvellous thing, I know that whereas I was born blind, now I see." Of the union of Christ and believers the apostle says; "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church:" and the apostle, in the verse following the text, says, that "Christ in them the hope of glory," is a mystery. The life of faith and holiness which the believer lives as the blessed effect of the gospel, is mysterious. Hence the apostle speaks of the gospel as the "mystery of faith," and the great "mystery of godliness;" because faith and holiness are produced, and promoted by the

"word of God, even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to the saints." The believer in Christ may adopt the paradoxical language of the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Yea, the mysterious effects of the gospel shall be felt in the blessed resurrection of the righteous to eternal life and glory. "Behold," says the apostle, "I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

II. The gospel preserves the nature of a mystery, in every period and degree of its revelation.

That must certainly be a proper mystery, which is not manifested and can not be known but by a special revelation from God. But that the manifestation of this mystery was made by God, the apostle asserts when he says that "God hath made known to us the mystery of his will." And again, "he hath made known to the saints what is the riches of the glory of this mystery." And hence the apostle calls it, "The mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The apostle intimates in the text, that the gospel has had very different degrees of manifestation under the Old and New Testament dispensations. In the former it was so obscure that it may be said to be "hid," when compared with the clear display under the latter. In both dispensations it is a mystery; in the former it was a "hidden mystery," in the latter a mystery revealed. "The mystery hid from ages and generations, is now made manifest to the saints." It can not be properly said, that what is a mystery is entirely unknown, while it is a mystery. Thus it was a mystery under the Old Testament dispensation, that God would call the Gentiles into his church. "The mystery of Christ," says Paul, "in other ages, was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph. iii. 4—6. But this mystery was not wholly unknown under the Old Testament dispensation. For God predicts by Malachi, saying, "my name shall be great among the Gentiles." The Father

predicts concerning his Son saying, "I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles," and promises to the Son, "I will give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," and "unto thee shall the Gentiles seek"—"unto thee shall the Gentiles come from the ends of the earth." When therefore the apostle says that the calling of the Gentiles was a mystery "hid from ages and from generations" and "not made known unto the sons of men," we must not understand these expressions absolutely, but comparatively, with respect to the manner and degree of manifestation. The mystery was not under the Old Testament dispensation so clearly manifested "as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets," and "now made manifest to his saints." It was not then manifested or made known, with respect to the manner and circumstances of it: such as, the miracles attending the gospel when first preached,—the great number of Gentile converts, their great knowledge, faith and godliness,—the clear discovery of things before dark and mysterious,—the rejection of the Jews and subversion of their polity,—and the signal triumph of the gospel over the ancient heathenish idolatry and superstition.

In the first "ages" of the world "and generations of the sons of men," this mystery of the gospel was in a great measure "hid." The promises and predictions of a Saviour, and salvation through him were "dark sayings." The first gospel promise, of Christ as "the seed of the woman, who should bruise the head of the serpent," must have been truly astonishing and mysterious, to our first parents. And although the promises and predictions made to the patriarchs, were more clear and particular, yet their true meaning behooved to be mysterious.

Under the Mosaic economy the "hidden mystery was veiled under types, and ceremonies, "which were a shadow of good things to come." Gospel peace was exhibited to them, in promises, prophetical declarations, and instituted rites. The language, of that economy, had a mystical signification, which the prophets themselves, did not fully understand: "Of which salvation, the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now

reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel, unto you—with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1. 10—12.)

Even under the New Testament dispensation, "which excels in glory," the gospel retains the nature of a mystery. The revelation or manifestation of the mystery is unfolded, but the mystery itself remains unveiled. The doctrines of the gospel, are such profound mysteries that none can fathom their depth, but the Spirit of inspiration, "who searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." The apostle says, when speaking of the preaching of the gospel, "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." The more we contemplate the mysteries of redemption, the more completely will they engage our study and command our reverence, wonder and admiration. We may well say with the apostle, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness:" and with the Psalmist, "such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I can not attain unto it." The apostle says, "I would not, brethren, that ye, should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." And yet the apostle finds the mystery of calling the Gentiles as connected with the rejection of the Jews, so deep, and dark, in its nature that he cries out, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." "The mystery of God shall be finished," when the marvellous craft and cruelty, and the mighty power and impiety of antichrist, "the mystery of iniquity," shall be completely crushed; and when all the gracious purposes, precious promises, dark predictions and wonderful providences which respect the church militant, shall be accomplished.

Conclusion.—Inferences.

1. The gospel is to be heard with reverence and attention, and received with faith and love. It is a mystery, and we should study it. It is the word of God, and we ought to believe, love and obey it.

2. The unsearchable wisdom of God in devising, and his infinite loving kindness in revealing such a wonderful plan of salvation. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

3. The spiritual blindness of mankind and the necessity of divine illumination and instruction. "The natural man receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

4. The change of the dispensation of grace, and the calling of the Gentiles, are truly mysterious. It must be resolved into the sovereign will and good pleasure of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will, and gives account of his matters to none.

5. The mysteries of grace exceed those of nature. The latter are the effect of God's wisdom, goodness and power; but in the former all the divine perfections are displayed in a most wonderful manner. The philosophic mind may delight, in some degree and for some time, in searching out the mysteries of nature in which his eternal happiness does not consist. But the gracious soul will delight forever in contemplating the deep and adorable mysteries of grace in which his eternal welfare is involved.

6. Gospel mysteries are objects of faith. The light of nature cannot discover them, neither can human reason comprehend them. Though we can not understand these mysteries fully, we ought to receive and believe them upon the authority of him who has revealed them to us in his word. In the eternal world the mysteries of providence and grace will be more fully unfolded to the saints. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now we know in part; but then shall we know even as we are known."

"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE REV. FRANCIS PRINGLE.

Francis Pringle was born in 1747, at Kirkaldy, a village in Scotland. The early part of his life furnishes no incident of a remarkable kind; after passing through the preparatory studies, he was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Kirkaldy, and sent to Ireland. He again returned to Scotland, and married Margaret Black of Pathead, a village adjoining Kirkaldy. After spending a short time among his friends, he again proceeded, with his wife, to Ireland, where about the year 1775, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Belfast, and installed in the congregation of Newton Airds, where he labored about twenty-five years. While in Ireland, his family increased to the number of thirteen children, seven of whom died young, and his only daughter was married there. Besides these domestic changes, he experienced great trials in his public work. The principles that afterwards produced the rebellion, had long been secretly working among the people, and many secret and sinful combinations were formed, to carry into effect the contemplated project.

Mr. Pringle was conscientiously on the side of the Government, but the opposite faction increased so rapidly and secretly, that he soon found that a great part of his congregation were involved in the secret oaths and conspiracies that prevailed.

To purge the church by discipline, was impossible. He could not know who were friends and who were enemies; it became dangerous even to remain neutral, and he was at last shut up to the necessity of resigning his charge and leaving the country. He returned once more to his native place, and the next year, (1799,) sailed with his family for America.

When Mr. Pringle left Scotland, it was not his intention to

settle in the United States. He was then appointed as a missionary to the island of St. Johns, Nova Scotia, by the General Associate Synod. But finding no vessel sailing directly for Nova Scotia, he shipped for New-York, from Greenock, intending to embrace the first opportunity of a vessel from New-York for St. Johns. He arrived in New-York in the summer of 1799, when great alarm existed in New-York on account of the prevalence of the yellow fever in that city, and in consequence of which all trade with other ports from New-York, was for a time interrupted—hence no vessel was found at New-York, to sail that season for Nova Scotia. This circumstance seemed a plain call of Providence to Mr. Pringle, to accept of the pressing invitation of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, to remain among them and assist them. The Associate congregation of New-York being then vacant, Mr. Pringle was appointed to supply there until the ensuing spring.

It is worthy of record, as a good exemplification of Mr. Pringle's character, and as an example especially to ministers of the gospel, in similar circumstances—that during a very rough passage of seven weeks, he had family-worship observed every day, on which all the passengers and crew, who could be spared from the necessary management of the vessel, attended. But owing to the roughness of the weather, he was able to preach only three Sabbaths out of the seven. Profane swearing was unknown on that vessel.

He labored as a supply chiefly in New-York and the eastern part of Pennsylvania, till he was settled in Carlisle, September, 1802, where he labored thirty years. He may be considered as mainly instrumental in keeping alive the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in whose bounds he was. When Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson were called to rest from their labors, he was in a manner left alone in a Presbytery of vacancies, all of which he occasionally visited, and cherished with paternal care.

In this part of his life, he had no trouble from political commotions, but his afflictions from other causes, were neither few nor small. Shortly after his arrival in this country, he experienced a heavy trial in the death of his oldest son Henry; and another still heavier followed some years afterwards, in the death of another son, David. He was a young man of fine talents and education; but from some cause, had become partially deranged, and in that state was drowned in the Hudson River at New-York. It is not easy to imagine a heavier affliction to a godly parent, but he was remarkably supported

under it. When the painful intelligence reached him, he was supplying in one of the vacancies, and about to enter the pulpit on a Sabbath morning; he went through the work of the day as if nothing had occurred; yet he was far from being unfeeling, his eyes were debarred from rest and sleep, and the grief of the heart found utterance in sighs and groans; even many years afterwards he could not allude to the subject without evident emotion.

In two others of his sons, James and Francis, he had for a time great comfort. They devoted themselves to the ministry, and were both settled, the former in Steel Creek, North Carolina, where he labored with great activity in an extensive and destitute region; the latter in Xenia and Sugar Creek, Ohio. But Mr. Pringle's satisfaction in having his sons for fellow-helpers in the work of the gospel, was to be of short continuance; it was only preparing him for the greater trial in their removal. Francis became consumptive, and concluded to travel, if perhaps it might be a means of restoring him. He went south, as most favorable for his health, and that he might at the same time visit his brother, at whose residence he finished his course about the end of the year 1817.

The following summer, James was seized with a fever, on his return from the meeting of Synod at Philadelphia; and after a short illness, he breathed his last in the same spot where he had closed his brother's eyes, only seven months before; he was laid in the same grave.

Not unlike the case of holy Job, Mr. Pringle had scarcely heard the end of one sad message, till another not less sad arrived; and not unlike, also, was his exercise under the trying dispensation. Writing to a friend an account of the last event, he added, "*The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.*" The two brothers had been from childhood singularly attached to each other, and the providential circumstances by which they were united in their death, was in the same letter adverted to in the pathetic expression of David, "*They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.*"

Another cause of heaviness to Mr. Pringle, was his apparent want of success in his congregation. Though he was sound and practical in his preaching, and highly respectable in his manner, yet the number of his people did not increase. They were few when he settled among them, and during thirty years of his labors, they would not probably vary ten, more or less. As the young grew up, they were either alto-

gether careless, or scattered elsewhere; and he frequently remarked to a friend, with painful emotion, concerning several such families, "I baptized all these, and not one of them has ever joined the church."

This account of his ministerial success, is by no means intended to lessen him in the esteem of any, or represent him as not useful; but it may furnish us with some profitable reflections, as, that it is not always granted to ministers to *see* the fruits of their own labors. God is sovereign in this matter, and there are often many excellent ends answered by the hiding of that from them, exercising their patience and humility, and stirring them up to more diligence. Again, we are not to conclude that a minister is not useful, merely because we do not see much addition to the visible church by his means; that is not the only use of the ministry, and even among the apostles themselves there was a very great variety in this respect. Again, the outward success, or want of it, that may attend a man's ministry, is by no means the rule of his conduct. If it were even certain that none were converted through his instrumentality, it would not of itself prove that he had not God's call to the work, nor warrant him to desist through discouragement. Jeremiah labored for forty years among a people, whom he had the pain to see every day becoming worse. Isaiah complains, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; but though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." The common opinion concerning talents, is a very erroneous one; with the generality, nothing passes for ability except what appears ingenious and attractive to the multitude; but the apostle teaches us, that in the body of Christ as in the natural body, there is a variety of offices, and a corresponding variety of gifts distributed to the members for their performance, and all of these worketh the same Spirit, and they are all equally necessary and honorable in their proper sphere. Because the eye does not perform the duty of the hand, we are not to conclude that it is not useful in the body, neither can the head say to the feet, I have no need of you.

It is therefore a very small thing for ministers to be judged by man's judgment, approving or disapproving, they are not sufficient to judge themselves, but he that judgeth them is the Lord.

In the year 1825, Mr. Pringle had again to mourn by the stroke of death; Mrs. Pringle, the companion of his pilgrimage for fifty years, the partner of all his joys and sorrows,

was removed from him at short warning, and by means apparently very simple. A splinter had run under the nail of her thumb, which caused great pain and some fever: and having at the same time a slight attack of influenza, she was confined to bed; a physician extracted the splinter, and she partially recovered, so that for one day she was able to walk the room, and attend to her household concerns; the pain however was but little abated, and the fever soon returned, and she rapidly sunk into the grave within a few days from the time she first complained. She was a woman of strong judgment, great reading and exemplary piety; her loss was to Mr. Pringle in many respects, the severest affliction he ever experienced, but he was enabled to bear it with remarkable fortitude. About the usual hour of the morning in which she died, he proceeded with characteristic calmness to family-worship, with those who were present, and sung Psalm xxxix. 9, to the end, at once suitable to such an occasion, and expressive of his own exercise.

"Dumb was I, opening not my mouth, because this work was thine,
Thy stroke take from me, by the blow of thy hand I do pine.
When with rebukes thou dost correct man for iniquity,
Thou wast'st his beauty like a moth, sure each man 's vanity.
Attend my cry Lord, at my tears and prayers not silent be,
I sojourn as my fathers all, and stranger am with thee.
O spare thou me, that I my strength recover may again,
Before from hence I do depart and here no more remain."

According to a desire of Mrs. Pringle, he still kept the house and a housekeeper, for the sake of assisting a young man then at college, who was prosecuting study, with a view to the ministry. Mr. Pringle continued to enjoy good health for some years, performing the duties of his office as formerly; but in 1832, he resigned his charge, as much from a desire that the congregation might be benefited from other supply, as from any great increase of his own infirmities.

On leaving Carlisle, he retired to New-York, and lived with his only surviving son. He was still active, considering his advanced age, but a very small circumstance shortly after put an end to his activity and terminated his life.

Walking in the parlor, a small opening in the carpet caught his foot, so that he fell and dislocated his thigh, which could not be replaced; and though he continued well otherwise for some time, yet his regular habits were interrupted, and his constitution rapidly sunk. He died Nov. 2d, 1833, in the 85th year of his age and in the 62d of his ministry, at the house of his son Mr. Thomas Pringle, in the city of New-York.

By his will he left a part of his library to the Thological Seminary.

If we should attempt to draw a character of him, some might think it uninteresting, as consisting only of ordinary traits: the general expectation in such cases being for something approaching the marvellous. But Mr. Pringle's life was an illustration of several points of great importance, attainable by the humblest, yet too often overlooked by the most eminent.

He had a number of maxims, by which he managed nearly all his affairs, and which he often quoted in an instructive way to others.

Perhaps the most prominent trait in his character, was punctuality, a matter altogether too little valued and practiced; it is almost incredible how much time and labor are lost, and how much confusion, vexation, additional labor and mischief are occasioned by the want of it. Mr. Pringle's punctuality might be called universal; it was not only the keeping of set times, but the observance of order and exactness in every work.

He never had great bodily vigor, but by means of his great regularity in his manner of living, he had uniformly good health. He did not appear so Jehu-like as some, but by his punctuality, he accomplished more ministerial service than many possessing much more bodily vigor; he could always be depended upon, for the time and place of his appointment, whether it were far or near. For many years he held the office of Synod Clerk, in which capacity his accuracy was thoroughly manifested. It seemed to be a point with him to fill up every portion of time with something useful, yet he was free to spend a reasonable time in social conversation, being of a cheerful, social dispostion, much interested in talking with children, which he generally rendered instructive by questions, suited to their capacity; indeed he had a rare gift for private exhortation to young or old.

He was an excellent textuary; from the mention of any clause, he could at once tell the book, chapter and verse, where it was found; or from the mention of the place he could give the words. He considered the Bible as the pure fountain head of divinity, and studied it more than all other books. On this point he had adopted Luther's maxim, "To be a good textuary, is to be a good divine;" he was not satisfied with the general idea contained, but as in all other matters, was singularly exact in his quotations. His domestic management was characterized by the strictest frugality; his

maxim here was, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost:" and in this as in every other respect, he had in Mrs. Pringle, a companion whose views entirely harmonized with his own. A stranger might have thought them penurious, but it was far from being the fact. Mr. Pringle would sometimes advert to John Wesley's rule as a good one in such matters: "Make all you can, save all you can, and give away all you can;" he did not indeed rigorously follow the first part of it, but it may be affirmed that he practiced the rest of it, as faithfully as ever did the original of the maxim. He made many contributions to benevolent purposes, some of them quite large.

An idea may be formed of his punctuality and economy, from the fact that while his income from his congregation never amounted to three hundred dollars, in a situation as expensive as the generality of cities, he provided in his house things honest in the sight of all men; performed many journeys every year, gave four of his sons a collegiate education, and "owed no man any thing." This was his maxim in matters of dealing, and probably not one in a thousand lived more strictly by it. He considered debt in most cases the same as dishonesty. This account may at first seem incredible, and for him to have managed so, would have been quite impossible if he had not received help by the occasional donations of a benevolent individual and other sources; still the whole amount was small, though he never complained, and the case affords a useful lesson on several important points, as that pecuniary embarrassments of ministers, not always perhaps, but most frequently arise by their own fault, their aspiring at worldly style, above their reach, or the want of economy with what they have. Here is an example of how little of the world it requires to meet all real wants.

Again, it is a proof that where a man will give himself with a single eye to the work of Christ, and humbly trust him for his necessary support, he shall not be left destitute. Those with whom Mr. Pringle had to do, were not generally more punctual than others; in such circumstances how common is it to complain of their delinquency, incur debts, or propose to resign the charge for want of support, to the great vexation of themselves and others, and to the reproach of religion? Thus did not he; but considering himself immediately in the service of the Lord Jesus, he looked to him for what was needful; and if it came not through one hand, it was the same when coming through another, and by this means also, he had

often with it evidences of providential care, which could have no place under other circumstances.

Finally, that contentment is more than half of possession. Godliness with contentment is great gain; more than one half of men's wants are imaginary, and it signifies nothing how much is actually possessed; without contentment there can be nothing enjoyed.

One thing further may be remarked, as forming a trait in his character, namely, great reverence for divine things. He never allowed himself to use scripture expressions in order to give a comical turn to common discourse. In the exercises of worship, public or private, he was remarkably solemn; he was beyond many, careful to sanctify the Lord's day, avoiding all temptations to worldly conversation, and promptly reproving it in others; in his whole deportment he was very circumspect: so that on those accounts he was greatly respected, even by many who cared but little for religion.

How common is it for ministers to fail in such points as these, who are considered remarkably gifted for the pulpit, and by the unsuitableness of their private manners, more than undo their public labors. How few might safely adopt the language of the apostle, or even adopt as fully as the subject of this sketch might, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you."

[The above sketch was chiefly furnished by the person referred to, as the student in Mr. Pringle's family at the time of Mrs. Pringle's death.]

SERMON,

BY THE REV. THOMAS PRINGLE. *

(Preached at the opening of the Associate Synod of Ireland in Belfast, July 12, 1796.)

"Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. 4. 1. 2.)

If one might judge from the avowed sentiment and disposition of some in the present age, there seems reason to conclude, that, as far as their exertions could go, what the apostle here proposes, would be utterly and universally frustrated. None should be accounted of as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Such violent prejudice is entertained by many against all pretension to a right, in some, in distinction from others, to exercise the office of the Holy Ministry, that if they could have their will, such an order of men, and, together therewith, the whole system of Christian ordinances, should be banished from the face of the

* This sermon was published at the request of the Synod before which it was preached, with the following preface by the Author:—

"The Author of the following discourse had no view of offering it to public notice, till the Synod were pleased to propose it. He reckons himself highly honored by such proposal, and wishes it had been more worthy of their approbation and public acceptance. His aversion, however, to appear in print has, in this instance, been overcome by his respect for the judgment of his Fathers and Brethren. He is not altogether without hope that, through the divine concurrence, it may be of use for correcting some mistakes, or obviating some prejudices, on a subject, which, he humbly apprehends, is of great importance to the interests of Christianity, the divine warrant of a perpetual Gospel ministry in the Church. It is certain that the happiest efforts would result from a strict attention to the duties respectively incumbent upon ministers and people. However well known these may be in general, an attempt particularly to state, and enforce a regard to them, will not, it is hoped, be treated as superfluous. Without any further apology the following discourse makes its appearance, as it was delivered, except some few trifling alterations, chiefly verbal."

earth, every form of Christian worship should be abolished, every shadow of revealed religion be made to vanish. The maintenance of religion, indeed, and the manintenance of an order of men, appointed to dispense its ordinances, appear inseparable. The fate of the one seems necessarily to involve the fate of the other; and, therefore, in proportion as men are impressed with the excellence and importance of the religion of Christ, will they see it their duty to account of those, who are regularly called to the dispensing of the Gospel and study faithfulness, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

In this passage the great Apostle of the Gentiles challenges that respect which was due to him and to fellow ministers, in their official character. Some, perhaps, were chargeable with thinking too highly of him, making him the head of a party, the Christians at Corinth having been deplorably split into factions. In this, however, they acted opposite to his mind. He disclaims all such pretensions. Others, again, undervalued him, and denied him his due honor. Here he states the light in which he wished, and in which he, and his brethren in office, had a right to be regarded. Even *as the Ministers of Christ*, appointed and commissioned, owned and assisted by him; Ambassadors for Christ, employed in his service, to preach his gospel, and propogate his religion. The word ministers, signifies servants, and, in its primary import such servants as were employed in rowing vessels, representing the ministry as a laborious work. *Stewards of the mysteries of God.* Teachers or dispensers of gospel truths or doctrines, which are frequently called mysteries, (Mat. xiii. 11. Eph. iii. 4. v. 32. vi. 19. 1 Tim. iii. 9. 16.) And the mysteries of God, as being of divine revelation: what human reason could not have discovered, and, what even when revealed, it cannot fully comprehend, or account for; and some of them having been comparatively hid for ages and generations till the times of the New Testament. (Rom. xvi. 25. 26. Eph. iii. 5. Col. i. 26.) Not masters of the churches; but the ministers of Christ in, and to the churches. Not invested with dominion over the faith or consciences of the people, but stewards appointed to administer unto them the ordinances which they have received of the Lord. Let a man, let every professed follower of Christ, regard gospel ministers in this light.

What the apostle requires with reference to himself and cotemporary ministers, is to be extended to their ordinary successors in the work of the gospel. But to conciliate and

secure this respect, the apostle teaches, that it is incumbent on those in the ministerial office to act in character. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." It is not all who bear the name that deserve it: only those, who, being regularly put in trust with the gospel, or, in a scriptural manner called to the ministry, behave therein answerably to their office.

In the further consideration of these words, three things chiefly demand our attention.

I. The divine institution of a gospel ministry.

II. What is implied in accounting of ministers as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

III. What is required of ministers to deserve this character.

To establish the first of these is like laying a foundation for the last two. For unless it can be shown with sufficient evidence, that the gospel ministry is of divine warrant and authority, or is an appointment of Christ, a claim on the part of any to be accounted of as the ministers of Christ, must be treated, and justly, as a piece of priestcraft, a gross imposition and usurpation. The complexion of the times and the tendency of some principles too much countenanced, seem peculiarly to call for an assertion and vindication of this truth, *That it is agreeable to the will and appointment of the Lord Jesus, that some be employed in his church in dispensing the mysteries of the gospel, even till the end of time.* That the apostles and other ministers in the primitive church had their office and authority from Christ, will not be disputed by any who believe the scriptures. Upon inquiring, it will be found no less true that Christ has appointed the office of the gospel ministry to be, in all succeeding ages, exercised by such as are regularly called to it. That this is the case seems undeniable from the following considerations:

1. From the commission which Christ gave to his apostles. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) Again, "Go and teach all nations baptizing them." (Mat. xxviii. 19.) That this commission is not to be restricted to the apostles or other ministers of that time, but to be extended to all who, in subsequent ages, should be regularly set apart to the dispensation of the word and sacraments, is evident from the tenor of the promise subjoined. "And lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world"—with them in their persons while they lived, and, after they had finished their course, in their successors in the ordinary parts of their office. To this purpose

he declares his will and command, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations; (Luke xxiv. 4. 7,) and says, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come," (Mat. xxiv. 14.) and again, "This gospel shall be preached in the whole world." (Mat. xxvi. 13.) The gospel is the principal ordinance of Christ's appointment for the salvation of sinners. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," (Mark xvi. 16.) And, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (I Cor. i. 21.) But whatever extensive spread the gospel had in the apostles' time and by their means, over a great part of the then known world, the universal commission given them was not then so perfectly fulfilled, as it shall be before the end come. However many were then, and, by their means, gathered into Christ, to whom it is promised, "the gathering of the people shall be:" (Gen. xlix. 10.) many still remain to be gathered in; which requires a continued exercise of the gospel ministry, consequently the exercise of it by others besides the apostles.

2. From Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Where the ordinance of pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry is declared to reach as far as the perfection of the whole body of Christ, and consequently to the end of the world.

3. From Rev. ii. 24, 25. Where Christ addresses a solemn charge to two sorts of persons to hold fast that which they had already, till he should come. "Unto you," that is, to the body of ministers or pastors in the church of Thyatira, who, collectively taken, are, in a preceding verse, spoken of in the singular number, under the character of the angel of that church. "And to the rest in Thyatira," other members in that church. A manifest distinction is made between the ministers and other members of that church. As the charge addressed to private church members can not be confined in its obligation to the members of the church in Thyatira, so neither can the charge as addressed to those in public office, be confined to the ministers of that church; but in them conjunctly the Lord requires all, both ministers and people, to maintain an inviolate attachment to the truth of the gospel,

even till he come; which plainly implies that, according to his appointment, a gospel ministry shall be continued in the church, while the world stands.

4. It is the peculiar distinction of the heavenly Jerusalem, or the church above, that it has no temple, no public ordinances as in the church on earth. "I saw no temple therein," says John. There is no exercise of the ministerial office, no preaching, no sacrament in heaven, but "God is all in all." "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Rev. xxi. 22.) But the immediate enjoyment of God in this world, the enjoyment of him without the intervention of ordinances, at least in ordinary cases, is a mere delusion. In the church triumphant, "prophecy," preaching and explaining the word "shall fail," (1 Cor, xiii. 8,) not take place. But in the church militant, "prophesying is not to be despised;" (1 Thess. v. 20.) and therefore, as needful in the present state of imperfection, to be continued.

5. To all this may be added, what indeed is of itself conclusive, the reasoning of our apostle, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." (Rom. x. 13, 14, 15.) If it is necessary to salvation to call on the name of the Lord, and, in order to that, to believe; and, if hearing is necessary to believing, no less so is preaching necessary to hearing; and if the former is necessary in all ages, the latter is no less so.

On such stable grounds is this important truth built, that a gospel ministry in the visible church is a standing ordinance of Christ. That, however, this doctrine of a perpetual ministry in the church may not be misunderstood, it may be proper to add that it does not necessarily follow from it, that there must have been a lineal, an uninterrupted, and always visible succession of ministers since the day of the apostles.* It only follows that, at all times since, even in the most degenerate periods, Christ has still had some, even in public office, to maintain his testimony. That this was the case, even during the greatest darkness and corruption, idolatry and ty-

* In this respect the gospel ministry differs from the Levitical and priestly office under the Old Testament, which the wisdom of God saw meet to confine to the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron.

ranny of Antichrist, may be inferred from Rev. xi. 3, "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy, one thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth," history explaining and confirming the prediction.

II. It was proposed to show what is implied in accounting of ministers, "as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." It implies,

1. An acknowledging of their office, a considering of ministers as clothed with authority from the Lord Christ, to dispense the ordinances which he has appointed, as ambassadors for Christ, (2 Cor. v. 20,) sent by him. Consequently a receiving of the doctrines which they teach according to his word, as the doctrines of Christ, to be believed on the footing of his authority; of whom the Father says, "Hear ye him." (Mat. xvii. 5.) In reference to this matter our Lord thus speaks: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (Mat. x. 40.) "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." (Luke x. 16.) "He therefore that despiseth," says Paul, "despiseth not man, but God." (1 Thess. iv. 6, 11.) For this cause he thanked God without ceasing, because when the Thessalonians received the word of God, which they heard of him, "they received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth,) the word of God." (1 Thess. ii. 13.) This is the main thing to be considered: that ministers act by commission from him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, the Head of his body, the church. Therefore the ordinances dispensed by them in agreeableness to his will, are to be attended, received, submitted to, as bearing the stamp of his institution. As ministers are bound "to teach" the people "to observe all things whatsoever Jesus has commanded them;" (Mat. xxviii. 20.) so in attending gospel ministrations, people should consider themselves as "present before God to hear all things which are commanded them of God." (Acts x. 33.)

2. Showing respect to their character. A good character is of great importance to their public usefulness. People ought therefore to hold them in reputation, while they act a worthy part, becoming their station. Those especially who are best acquainted with them, and most intimately connected, ought strictly to abstain from all injurious imputations, all unmerited aspersions. Ministers are men of like passions with others. They are encompassed with infirmities. For

these due allowance should be made, and forbearance exercised. But by this we would not insinuate that such as are corrupt in doctrine, or of dissolute manners, should be overlooked. Let them meet with due severity.

3. Being seriously concerned that ministers discharge their duty as the ministers of Christ. "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it." Col. iv. 17.) For this end they should pray for them, that they be "able ministers of the New Testament." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) "Brethren pray for us." 2 Thess. iii. 1.) "And for me," says the apostle Paul, "that utterance may be given unto me, to open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." (Eph. vi. 9.) Their work is great, their difficulties and temptations many; their faithfulness, especially if they are successful, eminently conducive to the glory of God, the honor of the Redeemer, and the interest of precious souls; their negligence and unfaithfulness, highly dishonoring to God, and of fatal consequence to themselves and others. Have they not then a claim to sympathy? Do they not stand in need of the prayers of their people. Ministers and people should labor fervently in prayer for one another, that they may both "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Col. iv. 12.) There is reason to fear that the neglect of this important duty is one cause that so little answerable fruit is brought forth under a gospel dispensation. If there was more earnest dependence upon, and application to, Him "who only can give the increase," the people might derive more benefit from their ministers' labors.

4. Contributing to their comfortable subsistence in the faithful discharge of their office. That it is the will of God that ministers should be suitably supported, is evident from the ample provision which was made by his express appointment for the priests and Levites under the Jewish dispensation. After mentioning this matter, (1 Cor. ix. 13,) the apostle adds, verse 14,—"Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." But besides that this is an ordinance of Christ, which will certainly have weight with the consciences of all who truly regard Christ himself: it is a maxim of natural justice, that the "laborer is worthy of his hire or reward." (Luke x. 7.) Ministers are "laborers together," under "God." (1 Cor. iii. 9.)

5. Regarding ministers as instruments only in the conversion, edification, and salvation of their fellow-men, so that whatever success may crown their labors, the praise of all is to be ascribed to the Lord, to the power of divine grace working

with them and by them. "Who is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth, any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 7.) To the same purpose, "By the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.) While care should be taken not to undervalue faithful ministers, so neither to overrate them; to ascribe any merit, power or influence to them which might in the least derogate from the glory of Christ. Are there diversities of gifts among them? Does one excel another in knowledge, in literature, in eloquence, in religious experience or spiritual endowments in general? Does he see more of the good fruits of his ministry? It is of use to himself humbly and thankfully to remember his dependence on God for all, to consider that "it is the same God, who worketh all in all. All these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii. 6, 11.) It concerns people to bear in mind, that for all his qualifications, and for all his success, a minister is indebted to the divine favor. While, therefore, they honor him as an instrument, let them not forget to give glory to him to whom it is supremely due. In recognizing the servant, let them not overlook the master.

III. We are now to inquire, what is incumbent on ministers that they may be accounted of as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. The whole may be summed up in one word, *fidelity*. Agreeably to the apostle's declaration, "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful;" that he act in a manner worthy of the trust reposed in him. In disposing of the goods put under his care and management, a steward cannot discharge his duty without conducting himself according to his master's orders, general or particular, in reference to persons, time, manner and proportion. Faithfulness is a qualification commonly inserted in the scripture character of a gospel minister, of which it is unnecessary to adduce instances, at least on the present occasion: and fidelity in the ministerial office comprehends especially,

1. The faithful delivery of divine truths. This necessarily requires,

(1.) The preaching of all the truths of God's word, accord-

ing to opportunity, "not shunning to declare all the counsel of God." (Acts xx 27.) "I have fully preached," says Paul, "the gospel of Christ." (Rom. xv. 19.) The whole system of divine truth is committed to gospel ministers, as a sacred deposit of which no part is to be concealed or kept back; but, as occasion requires, every article duly disclosed and inculcated. Hence the charge, "O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy trust." (1 Tim. v. 20.) Indeed, though all divine truths are of equal authority and certainty, yet there are degrees of importance among them. Doubtless those which are most immediately and essentially connected with the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners, are chiefly to be attended to, and principally insisted on. To determine which these are, it may be sufficient to consider what was the most frequent theme of our Lord and his apostles. *That* undeniably was the truth concerning himself, his person, his offices, his undertaking, incarnation, obedience, death and resurrection; the way of life and salvation to sinners of mankind through him; their absolute need of union to him, and an interest in him by faith for salvation; justification by his righteousness; regeneration and sanctification by his spirit; and the necessity of holiness and virtue, as a voucher or evidence of union to him. (See particularly John iii. 6, 14, 15.) "We preach," says Paul, "Christ crucified. We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus, the Lord." (1 Cor. i. 23. 2 Cor. iv. 5.) The distinction above hinted at, our apostle appears to have observed in preaching. Thus he declares to the Corinthians, that "first of all he had delivered unto them, that which he also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 3.) But while we direct a careful attention to the foundation, we are not to be heedless about the superstructure. Other doctrines, though comparatively of inferior moment, are not to be neglected. Such a connection there is among divine truths, that the omission, at least the denial of one, is prejudicial to others.

As faithfulness requires a delivering, according to opportunity, of all the doctrines contained in the sacred volume, which both comprehend the matter and serve for the rule of gospel preaching; so it prohibits the delivering of any thing for divine truth which is not stamped with the authority of heaven. Whatever is the offspring of human reason, is not to be taught as of divine revelation. The mysteries, or truths of God, must be kept pure, unadulterated with the inventions of men, of whatever name or authority, learning or virtue.

The mixture of human doctrines with those which are given by inspiration of God, as having the same authority, is what God condemned in the false prophets of old. "I have heard what the prophets have said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts. Behold I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not nor commanded them." (Jer. xxiii. 25, 26, 32.) The same thing our Lord condemns in the Scribes and Pharisees. Referring to their traditions, their false interpretations of God's law, he says, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark vii. 6.) Alas! how much is this practiced by many in our own day! Doctrines not only beside, but contrary to the word of God, are currently taught, and without any scruple, received for undeniable truth, to the dishonor of God and the ruin of immortal souls.

(2.) A faithful delivery of divine truth includes plainness, simplicity and perspicuity in declaring it. Avoiding, as much as possible, all ambiguity, confusion or obscurity of sentiment or language: and unfolding divine doctrines in words significant and easy to be understood; and as much as may be, in the words of scripture, the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. The necessity of this will appear when we consider the end of a gospel ministry, which, in part at least, is to explain, unfold and apply the doctrines of scripture, as they are to be believed with the heart and to influence the life; which effect can not take place without understanding them. They should be explained in a manner level to the capacity of the meanest hearer who gives attention and makes inquiry. Of such plainness, the great apostle was an eminent pattern. "And I, brethren," says he to the Corinthians, "when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom." (1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.) Indeed, when there is a studied ambiguity in expressing the things of God, and when the sacred orator affects to recommend his discourse with the embellishments of polite style and terms of art, what is said is much to be suspected of being either little worth or foreign to divine truth. Such a manner of preaching shows little regard to the souls of the hearers, though the souls of the poor and unlearned are of equal value with the souls of the learn-

ed and the rich; little regard to the example of Christ, the incomparable teacher, of whom it is said, that "the common people heard him gladly." (Mark xii. 37) "If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." (1 Cor. xiv. 8, 9.)

In the third place, this faithful delivery of divine truth includes a seasonable declaration thereof, according to the calls of Providence and the capacities and necessities of the hearers. To discern which, undoubtedly requires much spiritual wisdom, prudence and experience; and a diligent observation of the dispensations of Providence, of the state of the church and of the world; lest the souls of the righteous be grieved, when they should be comforted; and the wicked hardened in sin when they should be alarmed: lest truth should suffer from want of assertion and defence when particularly opposed; and error make progress for want of a due and well-timed testimony against it. Ministers as wise and faithful stewards, should "give" the people "their portion of meat in due season." (Luke xii. 42.) The apostle requires Timothy "to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," (2 Tim. ii. 15,) as an experienced husbandman divideth the seed according to the different qualities of the soil. Hence the necessity of being skillful in the word of righteousness.

In the 4th place, it includes the delivery of divine truth in due order and method, without which the word can not answer the ends of edification. It is especially necessary to preserve the Law and the Gospel distinct, and to assign to each its proper place. Their nature and design are very distinct. The one being designed to serve for a rule of duty to convince men of sin and obnoxiousness to the curse of God, and to be "a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they may be justified by faith;" (Gal. iii. 24,) and the other consisting in the free promises and offers of eternal life to sinners of mankind as such, through a crucified Jesus, to be obtained by believing. An answerable distinction should be observed in preaching. This duty attended to, the obscurity so common with some of pressing men to the practice of virtue by any strength naturally inherent in themselves, or antecedently to union with Christ, to justification by faith in his righteousness alone, and without dependence on his grace, would

be avoided. The demands of the law would be urged for awakening sinners, for convincing them of guilt and insufficiency, and of the necessity of absolute, exclusive dependence upon the Redeemer for salvation, as "he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) They should first be directed to seek union with Christ by believing in him, and then, in his strength, "without whom we can do nothing;" (John xv. 5,) and in reliance on him for acceptance of duty as well as person, be called to the exercise of all required duty. Without observing this order, without at least maintaining the distinction between the law and the gospel, neither the law nor the gospel can be faithfully preached. Without knowing and attending to this distinction, men will be disposed, instead of trusting only in Christ and free grace reigning through his righteousness for salvation, to rest their hopes on some worthy dispositions of their own, or duties of obedience performed by them; or at least to think these necessary to entitle them to Christ or qualify them for an interest in him. To this all are naturally prone. It is, however, inconsistent with the gospel scheme of salvation. According to the apostle's words to the Ephesians, "By grace are ye saved, through faith: and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.)

In order to this faithful delivery of divine truth, there is necessary,

(1.) The knowledge of it as taught in the oracles of God. How shall we make known to others what we ourselves are ignorant of? It becomes the christian minister to be adding to his stock by reading, prayer, diligent study and every mean in his power for acquiring the knowledge of the mind of Christ, that he may be more and more "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," and be "like unto a good householder who bringeth forth out of his treasures, things new and old." (Mat. xiii. 52.) "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." (1 Tim. iv. 15.)

(2.) A firm and steadfast belief of it. We cannot expect that one should be faithful in delivering what he himself doubts the truth of, or solicitous that others should receive it with due credit. As faith in the doctrine of Christ is necessary to personal salvation, so also to a zealous maintaining and affectionate preaching of it.

(3.) A hearty love and regard for it, as of the utmost importance to the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

Without this, and we may add a deep experience of the power of divine truth in sanctifying the heart and influencing the life, there is no sufficient foundation laid for an inflexible adherence to, and constant declaration of, the doctrine which is according to godliness: especially in times of trial, when hereby ministers run the risk of incurring the world's hatred and reproach. Without this they will be in danger of complying with fashionable errors, and be unwilling to oppose what the world relishes; contrary to the apostle's advice to Timothy, "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. i. 13.)

2. Ministerial faithfulness likewise comprehends a faithful and upright administration of Divine ordinances and institutions belonging to the New Testament Church. Christ, as a Son over his own house, has appointed these for the order and benefit of his church, ordinances for worship, discipline and government. These the ministers of Christ are to dispense, as they are taught in the divine records; all these, and only these, neither adding to them nor diminishing from them; keeping them pure and distinct from all ceremonies, rites and inventions of human appointment. God is a jealous God, especially in the matters of his worship, and abhors all mixtures and conjunctions of man's authority and wisdom with his own therein. None are at liberty to transgress the limits prescribed in this matter to the apostles: "Teaching them," says Christ, "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Mat. xxviii. 20.) The commandments referred to, are either expressly, or by consequence, contained in the scriptures of truth.

As all the ordinances of Christ are to be administered, so they are to be administered, in every respect, according to the Divine order and model taught in the word, rejecting all human appendages as corruptions not to be endured. This rule is to be observed with respect to the manner in which ordinances are to be dispensed, and the persons to whom; binding and loosing, excluding from, or admitting to, the special privileges of the visible church, according to the authority with which ministers are invested, as being intrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In the exercise of church discipline and censures, particularly, they ought to act with all faithfulness, integrity and impartiality, taking heed not to be biassed by favor or fear, promises or threatenings.

In every ordinance the authority of Christ is to be regarded as supreme. His royal prerogative and exclusive right,

as to determine articles of faith for the church, so to make laws for her regulation and government, is to be asserted, maintained and defended, against all encroachment of Fathers or Councils, Popes or Kings. All the power and privileges conferred on the church are originally from Christ, "who is given to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 22.)

3. Faithfulness in ministers of Christ, further requires a faithful delivery of the commands of God for a rule of life and manners. Binding them on unbelievers for perfect obedience, under the insupportable penalty of the curse of God for every the least transgression; that, convinced of their utter inability to fulfill the law, in their own persons as a covenant, or so as by their obedience to merit eternal life, they may be led to place their whole dependence for justification upon the law-fulfilling, law-magnifying righteousness of the Divine Surety: and on believers, as though in its covenant form, fulfilled by Christ in their stead for pardon and life, still obligatory upon them in all its extent as a rule of gratitude and holiness, and to be observed in his strength, in the faith of reconciliation with God by virtue of his death, and of acceptance for his sake.

4. It is proper to add, what indeed is necessary in order to give efficacy to their instructions, at least to warrant a hope of success, and what therefore faithfulness requires, that the servant of Christ should live under the power of the rules which he teaches; studying the conscientious performance of all known duty, and abstaining from all known sin, exemplifying in his practice the virtues which he recommends to others. People seldom affect to be better than their teachers. With whatever eloquence, therefore, or force of argument, they may inculcate the duties of religion and morality, if they are themselves palpably defective in the discharge of them; however strenuously they may dissuade from sin, however strongly paint the malignant nature and alarming consequences of vice, if they themselves are guilty, what good impression can they expect to make? It will be easy to retort, "Physician, heal thyself." (Luke iv. 23.) Example is of greater force than words. Ministers should therefore preach by their life as well as by their doctrine. Hence the propriety of the apostolic direction to Timothy, and in him to all gospel ministers: "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. iv. 12.) And to Titus, "In all things showing thyself a pat-

tern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech which cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." (Titus ii. 7, 8.) How careful should ministers be to shun those evils which have an evident tendency to expose themselves and their office to reproach and so to defeat the end of their ministry.

Here, however lamentable a thing it is, unquestionable facts oblige us to confess, that much of that disgrace into which priests, as gospel ministers are often called, (although, by the way, it is none of their New Testament names, but either absurdly assumed by some, or ignorantly and unjustly imposed by others, as a term of reproach,) have fallen, has been but too well deserved. The pride, the ambition, or love of pre-eminence; the covetousness, the selfishness or mercenary spirit; the low intrigue, nay, the scandalous enormities, the luxury and intemperence which too many *so called*, have indulged; the bitter animosities, the uncharitable contentions and party spirit, so unlike that mutual love and pacific temper for which they should be exemplary; these, and other evils, of which too many in the sacred office have been notoriously guilty, have brought an odium upon their character. Like Hophni and Phineas of old, they have caused the sacrifices of the Lord, the profession, the ordinances and services of religion to be abhorred by multitudes.

As it is not the way of mankind in general, to be very nice in making distinctions, especially in such matters, hence it is, that, because some act a base, an unworthy, a scandalous part, and are justly detested, all that bear the name of ministers too commonly share in the reproach thereby occasioned, and even the office itself becomes an object of prejudice and offence. This, to be sure, is not just. A little candid consideration would lead people to distinguish between the goodness and use of a thing and the abuse of it; between an office and the character of those invested with it; between the behaviour of some and that of others. It would show how unfair it is for the faults of *some*, to involve all in the same indiscriminate abuse. But shame belongs to those who by their misconduct cause their good to be evil spoken of, the name of God and his doctrine to be blasphemed, and give occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. The whole of what has been said on this particular, shows how attentive ministers

should be " to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things, to approve themselves as the ministers of God," (2 Cor. vi. 34.)

A summary account of the qualifications, both negative and positive required in ministers, and to which a regard is necessary if they would be accounted of as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, is given in the first Epistle to Timothy, third chapter, and in the Epistle to Titus, first chapter. To impress ministers with the obligation of possessing these qualifications, it is good for them frequently to review such an account with application to themselves. I hope it will not be deemed impertinent at present to recall it to the recollection of those immediately concerned.*

From what has been said we may deduce, among other things that might be noticed, the following inferences:

1. The indispensable necessity of a perpetual public ministry of the word in the visible church. This follows on the divine warrant and authority that there is for it. No institution of Christ is without its necessary use. The Holy Scriptures, it is true, contain a revelation of the whole mind and will of God concerning our edification and salvation. The scriptures, therefore, are the only rule of preaching. It must be wholly conformed to them. The subject and matter thereof must all be fetched from them. Nothing contrary, nothing beyond them is to be preached. " Preach the word, (2 Tim. ii. 2.) To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. viii. 20.) But the fullness of the scripture cannot supersede the necessity of preaching. Reading the Bible, as well as other books illustrating the same, is, no doubt, blessed for the conviction and conversion of sinners, and also for the edification of saints. Yet the benefit of the scriptures is not left principally to depend upon reading; a privilege, which, in former ages, was not commonly enjoyed, However common now, it is only of a private nature. Nor could it properly answer the designs of grace, if the scriptures were subjected to the precarious care of individuals about using that privilege. The visible church is of a public state, to which a public dispensation of the word is essential, bringing it to the ears of multitudes at once, many of whom might not be careful, or even not capable to read it. Preaching is appointed for a profit-

* Here the passages referred to were read.

able explaining and applying of those doctrines and duties which are proposed in scripture. It is, therefore, an ordinance of the most eminent consideration in the New Testament, very frequently mentioned in it; and it is peculiarly blessed for effecting the designs of grace, as believing in Christ for salvation is especially through the hearing of him, from the mouth of those who are sent to preach the gospel of peace.* Such, therefore, as enjoy it, should most thankfully bless the Lord for it, and pray that it may be made effectual to them for salvation; that from experience they may be able to bear testimony to the truth of his word, that "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. i. 16.) They should also have it much upon their hearts, that the precious privilege may be extended to those who yet "sit in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death:"† (Matt. iv. 6;) and that for the growing contempt and abuse of it, it may not be taken away from these lands.

2. Of what importance it is to the church to have faithful ministers bearing office in her. When those of an opposite character bear sway, how much are the people like sheep wanting a shepherd, or under the direction of hirelings who have no regard for the true interests of the flock? How much to blame are those who, though convinced of the obstinate errors or irregularities of public teachers, continue to support and countenance their ministry? How little concern do they herein show for the authority of Christ appointing the qualifications of his servants, for the glory of God, for their own souls or the edification of others?

3. What obligation lies on the courts of Christ to be careful in the matter of admitting persons into the holy ministry; to be satisfied of their soundness in the faith and unblameable conversation, as well as their capacity, in other respects, for being public teachers. The charge of Paul to Timothy on this head, should be religiously observed: "The

* The substance of this inference is taken from a book entitled "*Sacred Contemplations,*" by Mr. Adam Gib: a work which may be confidently recommended as exhibiting the most accurate and complete view of the Covenant of Works and Grace, which has ever appeared, perhaps in any language.

† The laudable exertions of the London and Scottish Missionary Societies are now directed to the attainment of this object. Every true friend to humanity, every well-wisher to the interests of Christ's kingdom, must applaud the benevolent design. May the means used for accomplishing it be crowned with ample success!

things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) Respect to truth, to the honor of God, to the interest of the present and rising generation, requires this. Hence those church judicatories are highly culpable who show no proper concern in this matter; making little inquiry into the religious principles of their candidates for the ministry, or the tenor of their conversation; admitting those of doubtful principles, if not openly erroneous, from whom there is little reason to expect that they will teach the right ways of the Lord, or that "by following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness," (1 Tim. vi. 11,) they should "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." (Tim. ii. 10.) In so doing, they are partakers of other men's sins, and, in some measure, chargeable with the injury done to religion and the souls of men, by the unsound ministry and the ungodly example of those whom they admit into the sacred office. The same is the case with respect to keeping in communion and the exercise of the ministry, those who, notwithstanding engagements to fidelity, make shipwreck of the faith, and turn aside from the holy commandment, to which they have promised obedience.

Upon the whole, let all in their respective stations, be concerned to serve the Lord faithfully in the suitable exercise of the talents entrusted to them, knowing from whom they have received them, and who hath said, "Occupy till I come." (Luke xix. 13.) Cleave to the Lord, his truths and ways, with purpose of heart. "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering." (Heb. x. 23.) In a time of such degeneracy from the truth, and such corruption of manners, "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." (Jude 3.) Practice religion, and thereby recommend it to others. Keep your garments clean, "being blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." (Phil. ii. 15, 16.)

Especially let my fathers and brethren in the ministry, as they would be accounted of as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, be reminded of their obligation to faithfulness. We must all soon give an account of our stewardship. It concerns us, therefore, to "take heed to ourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy

Ghost has made us overseers, and to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." (1 Pet. v. 2, 3.) "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." (Luke xii. 43.) "For when the chief Shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away." (1 Pet. v. 4.)

APPENDIX.

(A. p. 14.)

TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. ALEXANDER GELLATLY.

While some have no delight but where the cup
Of worldly mirth incessantly goes round,
Others more wise, where sorrow's children droop,
With sympathetic hearts are daily found.
If e'er it ought availed, to view the grave
Of him whose memory virtue had perfumed,
It will not be in vain a sigh to heave,
Where GELLATLY, *the faithful*, lies entombed.

In blooming youth he felt the power of grace,
Which called him to communion with his God:
And made his feet, (though arduous was the race,)
Like feet of hinds* along the heavenly road.
Constrained by love divine, nor friends that weep,
Nor aught that had endeared his native land,
Nor all the dangers of the boisterous deep,
Could him detain, Columbia, from thy strand.

To speak in God's great name where'er he rose,
His words were plain, but of celestial worth;
For so a heart, with love of truth that glows,
And with the love of souls, itself pours forth.
Recalled by fancy to our view he stands,
With countenance majestic and yet mild,
He saith to sinners, "God entreats, commands,
And will ye not to him be reconciled?"

The intercourse, *thought* meeting *thought*, how sweet,
Among *these poor* who from God's house return,
While they the instructive passages repeat,
"Did not our hearts," say they "within us burn?"
Studious of *life* as well as *doctrine* pure,
He kept the steadfast tenor of his way;
Th' unchanging promise was his refuge sure,
Nor could a frowning world his heart dismay.

* Habbakkuk iii. 19.

In converse, though his jndgment was exact,
Yet wit and humor intermix would he,
And gentleness of mind he never lacked;
From learned pride and cynic sourness free.
But when he deemed it was a time to feel,
When truth divine lay prostrate in the street,
His kindling features would display a zeal,
Which oft appall'd the votaries of deceit.

Yes, Gellatly, their plan thou did'st detest,
Who lightly of *some* words of Jesus deem:
The poor pretence of holding *all the rest*,
But ill concealed the baseness of the scheme.
The foes of truth thou firmly hast withstood;
Now thou'rt departed from the well fought field,
Still may there be, who with thy spirit endowed,
The panoply divine in Zion may wield.

Upon the church, (which was thy hourly care,)
While more and heavier ills were yet to come,
Than which thy generous heart could well endure,
Thy God and Father pitying called thee home.
What though she's fled whose lot with thine was joined?
What though her Anna (once an opening flower,*
That smiling sweetly seemed to be designed
Of thee a long memorial,) is no more?

What though ambition mock, because no place
The world allows thee in her rolls of fame?
Dear to the saints on earth while time holds pace,
And to the saints in light shall be thy name.
O'er sin the palm of victory thou hast gained,
With us it oft appears a doubtful strife;
But grace which high in thy salvation reigned,
Can make the perilous conflict end in life:
It can, it will, cries Faith; a gracious God
Hath given us life eternal in his Son:†
'Twas in this faith that Gellatly abode,
And by this faith the palm of victory won.

His grave stone bears the following inscription:

THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

MR. ALEXANDER GELLATLY:

Minister of the Gospel, Middle Octorara;

Who came from Perth in Scotland, into Pennsylvania, 1753,

And departed this life, March 12, 1761,

In the Fortieth and Second year

of his age.

"He endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and showed himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. ii. 3, 15.)

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* Mr. Gellatly left a widow and an infant daughter, neither of whom long survived him.

† 1 John, v. 11.

(B. p. 17.)

The following is the minute of the Synod on this subject:

Edinburgh, October 4th, 1770.

"Which day and place, the Associate Synod appointed the whole minutes of the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, relating to the coalescence with the Burgher Brethren, to be deleted; and upon the Presbytery complying with this appointment, that the brethren, (viz. Messrs. Rodger and Smith,) appointed on a mission to America, take their seats in the Presbytery; but if the Presbytery refuse this, the Synod empower the said brethren, with any other brethren of the said Presbytery, of the same views with them, to constitute the Presbytery, as they shall see cause." (Vindication of the Associate Presbytery, p. 7, 8.)

(C. p. 17.)

The following is the extract from the Minutes of the Presbytery, relative to this affair:

Pequa, June 5, 1771.

"The Presbytery entered upon the consideration of the instructions given by the Synod to Messrs. Rodger and Smith, and after long reasoning on that head, and application by a brother to the throne of grace for direction, they found that in making the union with the Burgher brethren, they have taken some steps inconsistent with the subordination to the Synod, to which they have been and are subordinate; and they are determined that for the future they shall have no ministerial communion with them until they lay the case before the Synod, and receive instructions from them: but they do not judge it for edification, in their present circumstances, expressly to comply with the Synod's demand. Which motion was unanimously agreed to, by the Presbytery, and Mr. Rodger and Mr. Smith, reckoning that the Synod's demand was materially granted, and being extremely loath to pursue any measures which might impede general edification, took their seats in the Presbytery." (Vindication of the Presbytery, p. 8.)

(D. p. 54.)

The following queries, addressed to the Associate Reformed Synod, through the Moderator, by Messrs. Henderson, Smith and Logan, will show their dissatisfaction with the union:

"Queries for the peace of our minds and for the satisfaction of the minds of many Christian people, with whom we stand connected.

"We crave that the Synod would be pleased to give us an explicit declaration of their mind on the following subjects, which we deem to be of importance to the peace and harmony of our churches.

"1. Will the Synod approve of the Act, Declaration, and Testimony, emitted by the Associate Presbytery of Scotland, 1736, for the worship, doctrine, discipline and government of the church, as containing a special assertion of truth and condemnation of error?

"2. Will the Synod approve of the Act concerning the doctrine of grace, of October 1741?

"3. Will the Synod adopt the declaration made by the Associate Presbytery of Scotland, respecting civil dominion and the qualifications necessary to the being of a magistrate?

"4. Doth the Synod think that the renovation of the covenants, as practiced in the Secession church, is a renovation of the National Covenant and Solemn League?

"5. Doth the Synod profess themselves under the formal obligation of that covenant, considered as an ecclesiastic deed, to abide by the doctrine of the Reformation?

"6. Will the Synod give up the scheme of occasional communion, and confine church privileges to the members of our own church?

"Sir—As you are not disposed to permit us free debate on the important points of testimony that affect our religious profession, and as we wish not to create groundless divisions in the body, we crave that the Synod will take our names from their roll, that we may be at liberty to do the best we can, as the Lord shall direct.

"MATHEW HENDERSON,
JOHN SMITH,
WILLIAM LOGAN."

(E. p. 54.)

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE, &c.

If some can see no difference between us and the Associate Reformed Synod, this is easily to be accounted for. The matters of God are little and unworthy of notice to men who mind earthly things only. In what respects the present life, many are quick-sighted, who cannot distinguish between good

and evil according to the divine law. A small variation in the least article of a civil constitution they can soon discern, and if they think the change is for the worse, they can predict its pernicious and lasting effects; how it will make way for other alterations, and in the end destroy our civil liberties. To withstand such a change is, with them, integrity, fortitude, duty and stedfastness, worthy of praise. The neutralist in a political controversy is despised, as a useless member of society, as a coward who hid his head in time of danger, or as a man so selfish that he will hazard nothing for the common good. Very often he is suspected, notwithstanding his profession of indifference, as leaning to the wrong side. Plainness, in any cause of this kind, is reckoned honesty; warmness passes for a zeal becoming the importance of the subject: to oppose even a small innovation is affirmed to be no more than a commendable inflexibility; as a little ground lost in the beginning of the day, may be the occasion of our being driven quite out of the field ere night.

Such is the wisdom of men, and such is their way, in worldly things, in things which engage their attention, and in things which they consider as interesting to themselves and to their posterity. But the reverse of all this in what concerns religion, is highly approved; and never more approved any where than in this country. According to the greater part, we ought to be very zealous about forms and modes of civil government; but indifferent about the discipline and government of the Lord's house. To be hot in defence of a political question is virtue; but if we are in any degree like the prophet, very jealous for the Lord God of hosts we may expect some such challenge as Ahab gave to him, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* In matters concerning our civil rights and liberties, we must be immoveable as a rock; but earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, is bigotry, the effect of prejudice, the infallible sign of a weak, a narrow, and an unenlightened mind. The least iota of politics we need not be ashamed to contend about,—men reputed great, and wise, and good, are in this respect an example to us; but these which are counted the lesser articles of God's law, we must regard as trifles, as subjects of controversy only among the weak and foolish. If opinions injurious to the public interests of the country are like to gain ground, it is a crime to be quiet, we must resolutely oppose these political heresies; if we are blamed for this, the answer is ready, viz. that we enjoy the liberty of declaring our sentiments, act from upright principles, and care little what reflections are

cast on us for attending, as good citizens to our duty: but if in this manner we testify our abhorrence of opinions which we consider as injurious to the interests of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and warn others against them, there is no excuse for us; we are led by a party spirit, are uncharitable toward other people, and guilty of an offence which cannot be removed but by retracting what we have said. If we appeal to former times, when our fathers judged otherwise, we shall be told of their blindness, their narrow spirit, and hear the superior light of this age extolled. But the true state of matters is, that in spiritual things the most part of this generation see very dimly, or not at all. The whole of our Christian profession is a very light thing to them; and differences which may happen about the manner of stating it, or about particular articles of it, seem so small to them as to be almost imperceptible.

As to the difference between us and the Associate Reformed Synod, it is plain enough to all, who seriously desiring information, compare the profession made by them in their *Constitution*, with that made by us in our *Declaration and Testimony*. The following are the most interesting, though not the only questions in which we and they are manifestly far from being agreed:

1. We receive the Westminister Confession without any reserve, as the Confession of our Faith: only explaining more fully than it does the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, which leaves civil magistrates no right to impose by pains and penalties, such a profession of religion as they think best on men's consciences.

The Associate Reformed Synod speaks so dubiously about this Confession, that we do not know what they mean. Let the first article of their Constitution speak for itself. It contains the whole profession of that body concerning their belief of the Scriptures, their adherence to the Confession, and other matters mentioned in it.—"It is the resolution of this Synod to persevere in adhering to the system of truth laid down in the Holy Scriptures, and exhibited in the Confession of Faith, and Catechisms larger and shorter; and to the fundamental principles of gospel worship, and ecclesiastical government held forth in the Directory for Public Worship, and the Form of Presbyterian Church Government, agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminister, with the assistance of commissioners from the church of Scotland.

"This declaration does not, however, extend to the follow-

ing sections of the Confession of Faith, which define the powers of Civil Government in relation to religion, viz. (Chap. xx. sect 4. Chap. xxiii. sect. 3. Chap, xxxi. sect. 2.) These sections are reserved for a candid discussion on some future occasion, as God may be pleased to direct. Nor is it to be construed as a resignation of their right to adjust the circumstances of public worship, and ecclesiastical policy, to the situation in which Divine Providence may place us. All the members of the Synod, in the mean time, acknowledge that they are under the most sacred obligations to avoid unnecessary criticisms, on any of these excellent treatises, which would have a native tendency to weaken their attachment to the truths therein contained.

"If any of the members of Synod shall conceive any scruple or scruples, at any article or articles of the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Directory for Worship, or Form of Presbyterian Government; or shall think they have sufficient reasons to make objections thereto, they shall have full liberty to communicate their scruples or objections to their brethren, who shall consider them with impartiality, meekness, and patience, and endeavor to remove them by calm, dispassionate reasoning: No kind of censure shall be inflicted in cases of this nature, till this Christian process shall be fairly tried; unless those scrupling or objecting brethren shall disturb the peace of the church, by publishing their opinions to the people, or urging them in judicatories with irritating and schismatical zeal."

According to this language, the first ever that Synod uttered, opposition to this or that part of our Confession, may be reconciled with an approbation of their Constitution. It forbids unnecessary criticisms only; and who ever found fault with any thing of that kind, who did not, at the same time, affirm his own criticisms to be highly expedient. No scruple at any article of the Confession, was it even the same with that of Professor Simpson, who denied the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, is deemed worthy of immediate censure. Yet we know that the Synod have lately affirmed the expediency of immediate censure in another case, which they pretended came under the cognizance of a Presbytery belonging to them; though the matter was in itself no other than a refusing to relinquish the Secession cause, and join with them. The article of their Constitution just now mentioned, leaves it also doubtful whether they will censure objectors to the Confession of Faith at all, if they manage their objections with decency, and keep them a secret from the people.

It would be more honest, if the Associate Reformed Synod reckon any part of the Confession not agreeable to the word of God, to tell us so. Neither we nor they need be ashamed to acknowledge whatever we may at any time find to be amiss or defective in our profession of the faith; and in consequence of seeing our mistake, to make this profession more agreeable to the supreme and the unerring standard, the Word of God, which Protestants unanimously confess to be the only rule of faith and practice. According to it, the confession of our own faith is to be made; and if we find any thing in the latter repugnant to the former, we must instantly give it up, or we contradict the first principles of our holy religion. But every one who makes an honest confession of his faith, must utterly disclaim all apprehension of any thing false or dubious in it at the time. He, as a witness, asserts what he is persuaded is truth, and confesses what he believes to be the doctrine taught in the word of God, which he is resolved, by divine aid, to maintain all the days of his life.

Such hesitation as that expressed by the Associate Reformed Synod about the Confession of Faith, and such allowance as they seem willing to make for any of their number who may object against it, are very agreeable to the spirit of the times, and may redound to their credit with many; but nothing can be more manifestly opposite to the views of those who belong to the Secession. The latter consider such hesitation, and such objection to the Confession, as a plain evidence of a secret aversion to our Reformation principles, and as a forerunner of avowed defection from them.

About sixty or seventy years ago, some ministers belonging to the Synod of Ulster in Ireland, began to hesitate about the Confession of Faith; they refused to own their adherence to it, or would do so only with some reservations, which made their adherence to it nothing; and to justify their cause, much was said about charity, candor, liberality of sentiment, tenderness to such as differed from us, and the unreasonableness of requiring more of any candidate for the ministry, than an acknowledgment of the scriptures to be the word of God. But what has the consequence been? The bringing in of another gospel, and the denying of our Lord Jesus Christ to be God over all, blessed forever. The New Light party as they are called, now prevail in that Synod; the little leaven having almost leavened the whole lump.

II. A distinguishing characteristic of the Secession, as a body, and that which draws a most visible line between them and other Presbyterians in Britain and in America, is, their

adherence to a Testimony against what they account the errors and defections of the present time. As many of these have either taken place since the Westminster Confession was framed, or have assumed a new color of late years, a more full and particular condemnation of them was judged necessary, than is expressed in the Confession. The truths asserted in it are not neglected by making a new application of them in a Testimony against the opposition now made to the doctrine and order of the church of Christ.

It is too manifest, that in several Protestant churches, the most part have quite departed from the spirit of that doctrine which is asserted in their respective Confessions. It is long since these were framed; and by the help of false coloring, opinions which have become common and fashionable in our times, are represented as consistent with an adherence to the faith professed by our reforming ancestors; which are, notwithstanding, as opposite to it as darkness is to light. Such deceitful acting in any case is sinful; in the matters of God it is exceedingly so: and the Testimony we maintain is intended as a protest against it.

Our stating the profession of our faith, so as by it to condemn those errors and defections from the right ways of the Lord, which are most ensnaring in our own days, is neither new nor unprecedented. When the Arians, Pelagians, and other heretics troubled the church in ancient times, their opinions were expressly condemned; not as if these had not been materially condemned by the profession made in the church before, but it was judged necessary to make their contrariety to that profession more evident, by a farther testimony in behalf of the truth; and in a time of wavering, confusion, and danger, it was judged necessary to distinguish, so far as the present state admits, who were on the Lord's side, faithful in his cause, and valiant for the truth, and who were not. The Protestant churches meant no reflection on the profession of the faith made in the ages before Antichrist, nor did they relinquish any article of the truth then stated and defended against various adversaries; yet they did not reckon adherence to that which is called the Apostles' Creed, or to that agreed on by the council of Nice, a sufficient discharge of their duty; this being neither a proper mark to distinguish them and the Antichristian synagogue, nor a proper testimony in behalf of such articles of divine truth, as were in their day most violently denied, opposed, and persecuted. Therefore, as the Lord called them and gave them strength, in one nation after another, our Protestant ancestors made a con-

fession of their faith, in which they held forth, asserted, and vindicated the truth of the gospel more expressly against the abominations of the church of Rome. The Assembly at Westminster judged a more full and particular confession, as to various articles respecting the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the Lord's house, necessary in their time. They did not depart in any wise from the truth received and professed in the churches of Britain at the Reformation; but seeing many new adversaries rising up against it, they framed the confession of their faith, so as to make it a still more express testimony against them than it was before. They endeavored indeed to take away some corruptions, the remains of Antichrist; but they injured not the truth set forth in any former confession, by their having made a new one more suitable to the circumstances in which they were placed, and more directly stated against the errors of their own day. The Synod of Dort agreed on certain articles (or canons, as they were called) as a seasonable and necessary testimony in behalf of those truths injured by the Arminian party, whose errors were at that time threatening the ruin of the Reformed Church in the United Provinces. That Synod was then, and has been since much defamed, on account of that glorious cause in defence of which they acted; asserting and vindicating the doctrine of free grace, in opposition to the Pelagian heresy, revived and dressed in somewhat fairer colors by the Arminians: but whoever appears on the Lord's side in a time of backsliding, and opposes pernicious heresies, will bear no good name in this evil world. That Synod did not injure the doctrines expressed in their Confession, by applying it in this manner, against the errors that were then spreading like a pestilence through their country. The real cause of hatred to them was their steadfastness, their holding fast that which they had received: but to render them odious they were represented as chargeable with innovation, as rigid and uncharitable, as guilty of destroying the peace of the reformed churches, and of laying new articles in the way of union among Protestants.

A Synod in Switzerland, in the latter part of the last century, in like manner, opposed a scheme warmly espoused by some eminent men in the Reformed church of France, who made high professions of moderation, and of willingness to heal differences, but were evidently leaning toward the Arminian side. The Consent of Doctrine which was agreed on by that Synod, and which was a testimony for the truth against these French Latitudinarians, displeased many. Ad-

herence to it was for a time required of such as were called to the ministry in the churches of Switzerland and of Geneva. But this was represented as an unnecessary addition to the former Confession of these churches, and as an intolerable imposition. Through the loud cry made against it, and through the lukewarm spirit of the times, it was neglected, and at length in a manner forgot. But was this for the benefit of these churches? Verily no. The most part of their late writers, whose works have reached us, being no more like their reforming ancestors, than tin is like gold. The church of Geneva appears to be wholly Arminian; yea, according to late accounts, the ministers of that city are suspected of inclining to the Arian or Socinian blasphemies. How is the faithful city become an harlot: it was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers, who have destroyed the flock. Calvin, Beza, Diodati, and Francis Turrettine, men who were not of the world, and who were for this cause hated by it, are no more; and a time-serving generation fill their place.

One instance more of this kind, though of an older date than that now mentioned, may yet be adduced. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England can never, by any fair and equitable construction, be made to speak in favor of the Arminian cause; yet this heresy began to infect some of the Episcopalian communion in the reign of James I. The disciples of Arminius were however as scarce, or more so, at that time in England, than the preachers of salvation by free grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ, are in this age. The Lambeth articles carrying in them a strong condemnation of Arminianism, were framed by some of the most eminent prelates in that church; and it was proposed that an assent to them should also be required of such as were admitted to the ministry. This was opposed, under the pretence that it was unnecessary, seeing the Thirty-nine Articles already received, were a sufficient guard against the Arminian errors. They would indeed be so, if men were not either so blind, or so destitute of integrity, as to wrest them exceedingly. But many (some of whom filled high stations in that church) have perverted these articles to an Arminian sense, who would never have attempted the expounding the Lambeth articles in favor of opinions which they so expressly condemned. Had these been adopted as a part of the Confession of the Church of England, they must have bid defiance to common sense, who would have said that its doctrine was Arminian. Many unreasonable, and many trifling things have been imposed in

that church, to secure the episcopal dignity and authority; but such an acknowledgment of the truth, as was necessary to preserve the flock of Christ from the contagion of error, was thought too much. Men were zealous in what they found affected their worldly interest; but not so in the cause of God. Every attempt which threatened to lessen the power and revenue of the prelates, has been opposed with firmness and resolution, often with much intemperate zeal; but those who set themselves to deny the grace, and to diminish the glory of our Redeemer, were applauded rather than censured. Thus while the Church of England, pleased with its own deformities, holds fast those remains of Popery in its government and worship, which were the cause of much trouble to many, who could neither in conscience approve them, nor yet have liberty to dissent from them,—it has lost that purity of doctrine which was once its glory; the Arminian heresy having almost entirely destroyed that part of the Lord's vineyard.

These things being considered, we will not be found to have acted contrary to the doctrine and practice of the church in former times, in our endeavors to maintain a testimony against the backsliding spirit of this age, against that manifest and increasing defection from the truth of the gospel once received among us, by which the church of Christ has been wasted and ruined, made a prey to seducers, and a scorn to enemies in our days. We have been in some degree mindful of the Lord's direction, to go forth by the footsteps of his flock.

We are for our part fully satisfied, that as matters now stand, adherence to the Westminster Confession, is not by itself alone sufficient to distinguish between such as take part in the common defection, and such as desire to withstand it. A prevailing party in the Established Church of Scotland, have adopted or favored various errors, have condemned in sundry instances the truth, and have perverted the discipline of the Lord's house exceedingly, while they still profess an adherence to the Westminster Confession: and others in this country, have in some sort owned it as the confession of their faith, while they either maintain, or suffer many in their communion to maintain, opinions which to us appear quite contrary to the spirit and design of that confession, very injurious to the cause of Christ, and manifestly tending to promote that apostacy, which through grace we would desire to oppose. Instances of this may be given when it is found necessary.

Now, the Associate Reformed Synod differ so much from us here, that they have fairly given up the principle on which the Secession was formed, and still remains distinguished from

other Presbyterians in Britain and America. No such testimony as that which we maintain, and for the necessity of which at this time we plead, belongs to the profession of that Synod. They say, (Article II.) "That it is their real intention to carry with them all the judicial testimonies against defection from the faith once delivered to the saints, which have been e nitted in the present age by their brethren in Britain, as far as these testimonies serve to display the truth, and comport with the circumstances of our church; and they will avail themselves of every call to bear a pointed testimony against the errors and delusions which prevail in this country." But every one may see, that this is the language of men who would seem to say something, and yet mean to say nothing. The testimonies to which they may be supposed to refer, are in sundry instances contrary to one another; and all contrary to the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod. If tried by the principles contained in it, they must fall together. But the framers of that Constitution seem to have been more intent to amuse people with language, in sound somewhat like that which they had been accustomed to hear, than to make them understand the *real intention* of their party. Has this Synod ever recommended all or indeed any one of the testimonies concerning which they speak, to the consideration of the people under their inspection; or given them any proper rule to distinguish between the good and evil, which their Constitution supposes to be in them? It can not be denied, that they may adhere to the decrees of the Council of Trent, in the same form of words. Some truths, and important truths, are expressed in the decisions of that Popish assembly, though composed of sworn and bloody enemies to the cause of Jesus Christ. The worst profession that ever was made of the Christian faith, displays the truth so far.

Upon the whole, no such testimony as that maintained by the Secession, either now is, or ever was maintained by the Associate Reformed Synod. In the passage last quoted from their Constitution, they seem in dubious language to propose something of this kind. But either that promise had no such meaning, or they have since retracted it. Above six years have passed away, and nothing is done in consequence of it; and lately a committee of their number has told us, that their Synod "are afraid of publishing too many papers called Testimonies; because these may tend to turn away our attention from the Holy Scriptures, and fix it on human compositions; and they are convinced that in this manner, all the trumpery of the church of Rome was gradually introduced. They

therefore," add the committee, "offer no other testimony to their churches, than the Bible as explained in the Confession of Faith." Some people in their communion, not having as yet fully entered into the spirit and design of the Constitution, have waited long for the *pointed testimony* they were taught to expect; and at length they are gratified with a severe condemnation of the papers called Testimonies. A hackneyed argument of the New Light party in Ireland, and of their Socinian brethren in England, against any other profession of the faith than this, That we own the Scriptures to be the word of God. It is as easily applied against one kind of papers as another; against these which are called Confessions, as against those which are called Testimonies. It needs only to be pressed a little farther. and the Westminster Confession, which stands not on very firm ground in the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod, will give way also, and fall, as the Secession Testimony has done, before it.

But the committee have not expressed all their dread of testimonies, and displeasure at the Secession, in this last accusation. They farther tell us, that their Synod "are convinced that in this manner," (viz. by publishing papers called Testimonies) "all the trumpery of the church of Rome was gradually introduced." As to the manner in which these were introduced, this committee greatly err; and if they are acquainted with ecclesiastical history, they must have done so wilfully. The truth of the gospel was forgotten by the careless in ancient times, as it is now; and few endeavored to revive the knowledge of it. It was slighted and denied; and the Lord's witnesses who asserted it, were constrained to seek an hiding place in the wilderness. It was hated by the greater part of men; and for this cause God sent them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie. New additions were time after time made to the worship of God, that it might be rendered more pleasing to the eye and to the ear, till it was dreadfully corrupted. Many Christian teachers borrowed too much both from the opinions and customs of the Pagans, that they might the more easily prevail on them to become professors of Christianity. By desolating wars, and frequent overturnings among the nations, learning was almost extinguished; and the ignorance of the multitude made them an easy prey to such as were ever intent to impose on their consciences, by some new and lucrative species of superstition; and the bishops of Rome took every advantage which the favor, the weakness, or the contests of princes at any time gave them, to increase their own power.

In this manner were the errors, blasphemies and bloody tenets of the church of Rome gradually introduced; not by such measures as those of the Secession have taken. Many faults attend the ministers and people of that communion; yet the members of this committee, who were long acquainted with them, may, if they please, tell the world, whether they found them neglecting the scriptures through attachment to human compositions, and disposed to receive such opinions, and follow such human devised modes of worship, as these which prevail in the church of Rome; and if they have found them guilty on this head, they may next tell us, if their neighbors, who, like the Associate Reformed Synod, own no other testimony than the Bible as explained in the Confession of Faith, are in general better acquainted with the scriptures, and more steadfast in their adherence to the several articles of the Protestant faith, as stated against the doctrine and practice of the Papists.

Such a charge against us, as is insinuated in the words of this committee, ought to be well supported, or it will be considered as the effect of ill-will, the language of men, who, having changed sides, are disposed to justify themselves, by representing the cause and people they deserted in the most odious light. The Associate Reformed Synod acknowledge it to be their duty, to treat pious people of other denominations with *great attention and tenderness.* Let them, however, treat us with equity, and reserve their *great tenderness* for others, who may, in their opinion, better deserve it.

III. The solemn covenant engagements we are under to continue steadfast in our profession, is another subject of difference between us and the Associate Reformed Synod. We never entered into a covenant which contained any thing like an oath of allegiance to civil magistrates. An engagement of fidelity to him who is the Most High over all the earth, King of kings, and Lord of lords, can never become void, as it is impossible we can ever go out of his dominions. We therefore own ourselves to be as much bound, by oath and covenant, to continue in adherence to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Lord's house, received among us, as ever our fathers were, or as our brethren in Britain and Ireland now are.

We ever esteemed covenants, partly of a civil, partly of a religious nature (if allowable in some peculiar cases) to be quite improper in our situation. To live quietly and peaceably, obeying the civil powers under whose protection we are, in all their lawful commands, is our duty, enjoined on us in the Lord's

word; and we engage through grace to walk according to this rule. Therefore our covenant engagements are a witness against us, if we are found disobedient or seditious in our behavior toward any government, established by the choice or consent of the people among whom we live. But a swearing allegiance to a particular government not requiring this of us, would be as absurd as it is uncommon.

The Jews at Rome gave Paul a strange account of the Christians of that age: *As for this sect*, say they, *we know that it is every where spoken against.* However unlike we are in other respects to those of whom they spoke, there is a similarity in this particular. Because we testified against some things in the civil constitution of Great Britain, as injurious to the kingdom of Christ, and refused to swear oaths which carried in them an unlimited approbation of it, we were frequently represented as inclined to sedition under that government. Now in America we are represented by the Associate Reformed Synod's party, as so much attached to Britain that we ought to be suppressed. This accusation is almost every where in their mouth against us. They ought however to take a little more heed how they speak. The charge is very grievous; and if it is malicious, it will hurt those that make it more than any other.

The Associate Reformed Synod are, we doubt not, as much attached to the government of this country, as any other denomination here; but as to such of them as once belonged to the Secession, they would not be less faithful and good citizens, though they had more conscience of paying their vows to God; the vows their fathers came under, and which they themselves have often acknowledged as binding on them.

As to these covenant obligations, the Associate Reformed Synod consider themselves, as a church, free from any obligation by them. They however say, that they have an affectionate remembrance of them. This seems an empty compliment at taking farewell. They may have an affectionate remembrance of the covenant of friendship between Damon and Pythias, two celebrated Pagans. They mention them as well intended engagements. Here their language is more easily understood than usual. They cautiously avoid an approbation of them as just and lawful engagements. They make the end designed to be the support of civil and religious liberty; as if our ancestors had only joined in a league, to defend the liberty of making a profession of any religion, which this or that man among them might devise for himself; and had not engaged

to maintain the reformed religion, as it was professed by them, and as it has been transmitted to us. They add, that they hold themselves bound by the divine authority, to practice all the moral duties contained in these covenants. If the Koran had been the subject, the language would be still proper. We may tell the deluded votaries of Mahomet, that we hold ourselves bound by the divine authority, to practice all the moral duties contained in that impious and foolish book, which the impostor gave them to be a rule of their faith. We are bound by the divine authority, to practice all the moral duties which ever were heard of in the world, according to the opportunities we have of serving God, and doing good to men.

But the obligation to duty arising from the divine authority, does not render our engaging to perform it superfluous. If a man is called to an office in the State, he is bound by the divine authority to act uprightly in it; yet this supersedes not the necessity of requiring from him an oath of fidelity. The Associate Reformed Synod will not surely deny, that ministers are bound by the divine authority to practice all the moral duties contained in their own formula; yet I suppose they will not choose to ordain ministers without requiring some engagement from them.

The committee formerly mentioned have said somewhat about public covenanting; but they are silent as to the confession we ought to make of the sins of the church and of the land, though our backslidings are many, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. The bond they propose is such, as almost any denomination of Christians may, in consistency with their own profession, swear it. Doctrine, worship, discipline, and government are mentioned; but while the bond, having no reference to any particular profession of religion, does not ascertain what doctrine, worship, discipline, and government are intended, the swearers may have very different, yea very opposite views. If a man is called to swear allegiance to the State, it is not thought sufficient that he is willing to swear that he will be subject to government: the question is, what he esteems a right or lawful government. During the late war, every man would readily have come under a general engagement to submit to lawful authority: but this would not have made the requisite distinction between those who were for, and those who were against, the independence of this country.

The bond this committee have proposed is quite agreeable to the Constitution of their Synod. It is framed for people who are agreed in what are called the essentials of christian-

ity, but who differ widely as to these things which are said to be circumstantial; and it is framed on this principle, that we have no particular concern either with the covenant engagements our fathers entered into, or with their breach of vows, and defection from the Lord's cause. These are its distinguishing excellencies, which moved the committee to recommend this plan of their own, as "infinitely better" than the manner of covenanting which we, acting on the principles of the Secession, proposed in an overture we published on that subject. Great is the advantage their profession is like to have over ours; by their infinitely better way of covenanting, theirs must be infinitely better, and infinitely different from ours.

IV. Any one who compares the Formula of Questions put to ministers and elders at their ordination among us, and the Formula subjoined to the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod, will see a very manifest difference, not in words only, but in the profession required of office-bearers.

The first five questions in ours, express what is required of the person ordained, as to his faith, and as to his desire, through grace, to continue in a steadfast adherence to our received principles. The rest express what is required of him as to his practice. They are all materially, though not verbally, the same with those used by the Secession judicatories since its beginning. The former are as follows:

"Q. 1. Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice?

"Q. 2. Do you believe and acknowledge the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and Catechisms larger and shorter, agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with commissioners from the Church of Scotland; as these are received in the Declaration and Testimony, published by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, to be the doctrines taught in the word of God; and are you resolved, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to maintain this as the Confession of your Faith, against all contrary opinions?

"Q. 3. Do you acknowledge Presbyterial church government to be of divine institution, and appointed by Jesus Christ, the only King, Head, and Lawgiver of the church, to continue in it to the end of time; and do you adhere to the same, as stated in 'The Form of Presbyterial Church Government and Ordination of Ministers,' agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and as testified for by us;

and are you resolved, by the Lord's assistance, to maintain and defend the same against all contrary opinions?

"Q. 4. Do you adhere to the 'Declaration and Testimony for the Doctrine and Order of the church of Christ, and against the Errors of the present time,' agreed upon by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, 1784. And do you in your judgment, disapprove the manifold errors and Latitudinarian schemes prevailing in these United States, which are condemned in that Declaration and Testimony, as contrary to the word of God, to the profession of the faith we make, and to the solemn engagements we in this church are under to continue in that profession?

"Q. 5. Do you acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the solemn covenant engagements we in this church are under, as they have been explained in the Declaration and Testimony agreed upon by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania; and are you resolved, through grace, to endeavor faithfulness in adhering to the testimony maintained by the Lord's witnesses for these reformation principles we profess, in contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and in attending to all these duties which the Lord in his word hath enjoined upon us, and which we in this church are, by these our covenant engagements, bound to perform?"

In place of these, the Associate Reformed Synod have only this question, which merely requires an approbation of their Constitution:

"Do you approve of the principles exhibited in the Constitutional articles of the Associate Reformed Synod, now read; and do you resolve, through grace, to adhere thereto, in opposition to all Deistical, Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Neonominian, and Sectarian errors, and all other opinions which are contrary to sound doctrine, and the power of godliness?"

The errors mentioned we all ought to be on our guard against; but this Synod have no where declared what they are; though, as matters presently stand, this was highly necessary, both for the information of those who are to be ordained, that they might in truth and in judgment engage to testify against them; and also that it might be manifest to all, how far the Synod meant to go in testifying against such opinions as may fall under one or other of those designations.

In the Declaration and Testimony agreed on by us, we choose rather to mention the errors themselves which we condemn, than the designations which they bear from the authors of them, or from the nature of them; and our reason for do-

ing so was, that in the present time many Popish, Socinian, Arminian, Neonomian and Sectarian errors, are taught by persons who are not known by any one of these designations. In this sceptical age, many are properly attached to no one sect of heretics, and yet seem to glean a little from many, or from almost every description of such men.

The person to be ordained in the Associate Reformed Synod, is not to be considered as condemning the errors enumerated in the question already mentioned, any farther than the Constitution of that Synod condemns them; and we can not consider it as any proper, any explicit testimony against them at all. It is so dubious, that one may hold various of these errors, and yet profess satisfaction with *the principles exhibited in it.* Is he an enemy to some truth stated in the Confession of Faith? he can easily vindicate himself as in no way inconsistent; he approves that *excellent treatise;* but he has *conceived some scruples* at a few articles of it, and thinks a *criticism* here and there necessary. So thought the celebrated Mr. Baxter; the alteration of a few words in it would have satisfied him. Yet he was the man who began that perversion of the gospel among the nonconformists in England, which has increased to a dreadful apostacy from the faith of Christ with many of them. Baxterians became in process of time followers of Arminius: the next step was to Socinian blasphemies; and the last has been, and with many is still like to be, *absolute infidelity.*

About the year 1720, the Baxterian or Neonomian scheme prevailed so much in Scotland, that sundry truths opposite to it, extracted out of a book entitled, the *Marrow of Modern Divinity,* were condemned by a leading party in the General Assembly of the national church. These men professed adherence to the Confession of Faith in stronger terms than the Associate Reformed Synod does; yet they perverted the gospel, by turning it into a new law covenant, according to which salvation was offered to sinners, not freely through Jesus Christ but conditionally on the performance of certain terms prescribed to them. The defenders of this scheme are highly displeased at the condemnation of it by the Secession: but surely there is nothing in the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod, which can be an offence to them. That Synod have ended the controversy; but have done so to the injury of truth. The doctrine of free grace through our Lord Jesus Christ, is in this instance sadly neglected. The Neonomian scheme may find acceptance among them, or it may not. There is nothing to hinder men of that description from entering into the

ministry among them. Do they reckon the testimony we maintain against this a local peculiarity, unworthy of their notice?

Several members of the Associate Reformed Synod, who formerly belonged to the Secession, made the effecting a coalition with the Reformed Presbytery, an excuse for the steps they have taken: but the Constitution of their Synod is a manifest proof that something more than union with that party was intended. It is not merely matters of controversy between us and the Reformed Presbytery, nor merely local peculiarities, as they call them, which are laid aside: but every thing which distinguished the Secession body from other Presbyterians in Britain and America. Concern for that purity of doctrine which through the Lord's goodness has been hitherto maintained in the Secession, cannot be strong, where this one lame question is judged a sufficient evidence of soundness in the faith, when it is answered in the affirmative by those who are to be admitted into the ministry. Yet lame as this question is, preachers have been in sundry instances employed among them, without being required to answer it; and if the people had been as easily satisfied as the ministers were, it is likely such instances would have been still more common.

V. The Associate Reformed Synod and we are so far agreed about the terms of admission to church fellowship, that we both profess to exclude the grossly ignorant, and such as have not a conversation becoming the gospel. But we differ about two questions respecting this matter; and the determination of them must, in its consequence, have a great and lasting influence on the state of the church.

The first is, concerning the Testimony maintained by the Secession. We exclude all who are in a stated opposition to it. The admission of such would be a falling from that Testimony. In admitting them we might expect confusion; and ruin would follow. Can the members of a church stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, while not agreed about the very principles on which they are joined together in one visible society? If we take fire into our bosom, is it any wonder we are hurt? We are often sore pressed by enemies from without: to have such in our own house is still more dangerous.

We do not, as some affirm, confine the church of Christ to those of our own denomination. Such a thought is far from us. We are bound to love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ; but we are not bound to follow them in strengthening the hands

of backsliders, and in opposing such as are endeavoring to maintain the purity of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government in the house of God. It is not safe for us to be where the cause and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ is betrayed or despised; and where our continuance as church members, may have rather a tendency to harden others in their evil ways, than to reclaim them.

The same principles which constrained us to withdraw from the corrupt party, under whose influence and management the established church of Scotland has, for a long time declined from its former purity and zeal, stand in the way of our entering into the communion of any other church, where the like or as grievous disorders and errors prevail, with as little prospect of reformation. Our secession has been much blamed, but we see no cause to repent of it; but rather to bless the Lord, who led those who began it in a way they knew not. Had it not been for the Testimony we have in much weakness maintained against overflowing corruptions, matters would have been still worse at this time than they are.

As the Associate Reformed Synod have disclaimed every thing which distinguishes the Secession body from other Presbyterians; so in describing the terms of admission to their fellowship, no mention is made of any testimony against the errors and defections of the present time, except what those from whom we made a secession will allow. The most corrupt, who in any sort receive the Westmintster Confession, though ever so much enemies to the secession cause, will find the door open for their admission, by the 6th Article of the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod, which is as follows:

"The terms of admission to fixed communion with the Synod shall be, soundness in the faith, as defined in the above mentioned Confession of Faith, Catechisms, &c.; submission to the government and discipline of the church: and a holy conversation."

But it seems there is another kind of communion, beside that which they call FIXED, allowed by this Synod. About this, they and we are far from being agreed. The 7th article of their Constitution expresses their mind, so far as they have thought proper to declare it, concerning this matter:—"The members of Synod also acknowledge it to be their duty, to treat pious people of other denominations with great attention and tenderness. They are willing, *as God affordeth opportunity, to extend communion to all, who in every place call*

on the name of the Lord Jesus, in conformity to his will: But as occasional communion, in a divided state of the church, may produce great disorders, if it be not conducted with much wisdom and moderation, they esteem themselves, and the people under their inspection, inviolably bound, in all ordinary cases, to submit to every restriction of their liberty, which general edification renders necessary."

Occasional communion is, both name and thing, a late invention. The apostolic churches were one in profession, and Christians were in those days admitted to partake of the seals of the covenant of grace, by any particular church, in whose bounds they might at any time reside; in the very same manner as one may be admitted to church fellowship by us, and by our brethren in Britain or in Ireland; a sufficient testimonial of his character being transmitted with him, from one place to another. But that which is understood by occasional communion, is what can have no existence but in such a broken state of the church as the present is. It is Christians of different denominations, as presbyterians, congregationalists, and episcopalians, sitting down together at the Lord's table, and when they rise from it, returning each one to his own party. This is the import of the term as defined by Dr. Watts,* and other celebrated writers on the subject.

The Westminster Assembly (to whose words there seems to be a reference in this article about occasional communion) never intended to withdraw from the fellowship of other churches agreeing with them in the profession of the faith, holding fast that which they had attained; and so far as they were defective in government, worship, or discipline, acknowledging this, and laboring after a more perfect reformation. But that this Assembly ever meant to assert the lawfulness of that which is called occasional communion, or that they judg-

* Dr. Watts distinguishes church communion in the same manner as the Associate Reformed Synod; but his language is more intelligible than theirs. "We must," says he, "distinguish between that communion which is fixed and constant in one church, and that which is only occasional.

"By fixed, constant, and complete communion, I mean the joining myself to a particular church, so as to become a complete member of that religious society; engaging to perform at appointed times and places, my most usual public worship with that society, rather than with others; to assist in all services necessary to support that society, and partake of all privileges of it, for mutual edification and comfort, and to maintain the public honor of Christ in the world.

"By occasional communion, I understand a mere participation of the general and special ordinances of the gospel, with a particular church for a time, under the general character and claim of christianity, and so far as occasions of Providence may make it convenient and desirable; but not to become properly a member of that particular society, nor be interested in the affairs, regulation, or management of it." See his *Rational Foundation of a Christian Church*. Chapter 4.

ed it safe to receive those into their fellowship, who were in a stated opposition to the cause and work of God, in which that Assembly were engaged, cannot be proved.

The Relief Synod in Scotland, and this newly formed one in America, may defend their opinion about occasional communion by what arguments they think fit; but they will never convince such as are acquainted with the history of the Westminster Assembly, that it meant to favor their views. Often has that Assembly been blamed as too rigid, and averse to any sort of fellowship with those who differed with them. But neither friends nor enemies seem to have understood their words till very lately, if the exposition of these two Synods is just. They may try to silence people with the authority of the Confession; but surely they either do not enquire very seriously into the matter, or they find some difficulty in persuading themselves that it is on their side.

The Associate Reformed Synod had foresight enough to perceive that this article of their Constitution would be contested. Therefore they were at pains to engage advocates to plead for it. It happened, however, that they applied to some who were bespoke by the other side. The Secession is invited to stand by the Westminster Confession, in defence of occasional communion. "The principle," says a foot note, "expressed in this article, is not a new principle adopted by the Synod, it is one of the received principles of the Secession; and it is set in a very strong light in the 26th chapter of the Confession of Faith, which largely describes the communion of the catholic church." Such a tale about the Secession might be believed by those who have only heard that body named; but it is somewhat strange that it should be told by men, who knew that it is one of the received principles of the Secession, to testify against that occasional communion, in favor of which this article of their Constitution was designed. The repeated declarations of the Secession judicatories; the constant practice in their congregations respecting admission; the testimony of their neighbors, friends or enemies, must, with every reasonable man put it beyond all possibility of doubt, that they absolutely reject the doctrine of occasional communion; neither granting to Christians of any other denomination, nor asking from them, any such indulgence.

The committee of the Associate Reformed Synod, formerly mentioned, have labored, and not spared words, to vindicate, or excuse, or soften, or explain this article of their Constitution. But the commentary is as dark as the text. They except against communion with Papists, with those whom they

call raving sectarians, and with churches which impose any thing sinful as a term of admission to their fellowship. But the exception ought to extend further. The most corrupt churches, in which Arians, Socinians, and other enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ are suffered to teach, and to seduce the simple, yea, churches chiefly or wholly made up of such men, will admit any to their communion who own themselves Christians; requiring nothing more of them than that they believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. This is a snare of the subtle fowler. The communion which is most pernicious, and which is indeed nothing else than a confederacy against Christ, may be offered on very easy, and apparently fair terms. But as the body is to which we join ourselves, so must our adherence to it be. If we join a church obstinate in backsliding; we take part in its backslidings. If we join a church maintaining heresy; we act with it against the truth. If we join a church avowing a contempt of any part of the testimony of Jesus, a church which refuses to assert and vindicate the truth, when called upon so to do; especially a church which makes our approbation of its indifference and neutrality in the cause of God, a condition of our being admitted into it; we are surely approving these evils. If we join those who are attempting to suppress any proper testimony against the apostacy of the present time; we strengthen the party we ought to oppose.

Neither the defects of a church, though many, nor the faults of individuals, while the order and discipline of the Lord's house are not commonly and wilfully neglected, render its communion unsafe. But into the society of those who are obstinate in backsliding and corruption, we ought not to enter; to come out from among such and be separate is our duty.

It would be tedious to enlarge on every subject about which the parties of whom we speak differ. If the Associate Reformed Synod adopt the work of their committee, by passing into a judicial deed, the *Draught of an overture*, &c. the difference between them and the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania will be much increased. That work contains sundry things both with respect to doctrine and discipline, which we apprehend are not agreeable to the word of God. But while it is uncertain whether they will as a Synod approve it; or if they do, what alterations they may see cause to make, the discussion of it may be left to themselves. The remarks which have been made on it are only such as were necessary to show, that the spirit, design and tendency of it, and of the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod are the very same.

The Associate Reformed Synod must, themselves being judges, either allow that the difference between them and us is very great, or that they are very inconsistent. They profess that they will be slow to censure offending members among themselves, and that they reckon it their duty to treat pious people of other denominations with great attention and tenderness; yet how much have they labored to suppress us altogether? Either they are not so charitable as they seem to be; or they are persuaded in their conscience that we differ so much from them, that they can exercise little charity towards us.

The difference between us and the Associate Reformed Synod cannot be removed, unless by our deserting the principles of the Secession for the sake of agreement with them; or by their returning to the profession which the most part of them formerly made. As to the first of these ways, we desire to be kept from it. The agreement obtained at such a price would be too dear. And as to the last, we entertain little or no hope of it. If the Associate Reformed Synod shall continue in existence for any length of time, their opposition to the Secession cause will become more and more manifest. They have been departing from it for some years past, and have not yet gone so far as they will go. They are evidently more desirous of union with those whose views are more agreeable to their own, than ours are. The body of this generation are gone into a course of backsliding, which carries them farther and farther from the right ways of the Lord; and when men once give way to this, like a mighty stream, it sweeps them away, they know not whither.

In this time of general and grievous defection, all who desire to be found faithful ought to watch, lest they be ensnared, and led astray ere they are aware. The Lord Jesus is still saying to us, "Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

(F. p. 56.)

New York Nov. 3, 1784,

Dear Sir—The deep concern I have for you, induces me to desire to know before sermon this evening, whether you have freedom to commemorate the Redeemer's death with us on these easy and generous terms:—that you profess your willingness, under scruples, to be open to conviction, and that

your joining with us, shall not, for this time be considered as forming a permanent connexion. I do not mean to draw you into a snare, but I would have you guarded against disobedience to a peremptory command of the blessed Jesus, which I am sure cannot be justified by all the scruples you have. Converse with your brethren about this proposal, and spread it before the Lord. The matter is serious. I aim sincerely at the good of your soul. May God direct you. If you shall have liberty to comply with this proposal, I will mention it to the session, who I doubt not will cheerfully invite you to a seat at the Lord's table.

I am &c.

JOHN MASON

ANSWER THE SAME DAY.

Rev. and Dear Sir—I am much obliged to you for the concern you express for my welfare. I esteem your pains, in taking the trouble to write to me on the subject as a mark of your regard for me, as what you believe serves my best interest. But, as I am accountable to God for my conduct, and the motives that induce me to take the course that now appears to be my duty however disagreeable in other respects, (being under the necessity of separating from some of my dear acquaintances and friends in Christ whom I esteem and regard) yet a consistent profession and practice of the witnessing cause, I am under the most solemn obligations to adhere to, does not permit to take any step that would involve me in inconsistency. I wish to be enabled to act in such a way that my former profession and practice, may not clash with my present. It appears to me necessary, therefore, in order to maintain this uniformity, that I refrain from joining with you in shewing forth the Lord's death at this time. I am perfectly satisfied with the profession I have made, and am under solemn obligations to maintain and abide by it all the days of my life; and the grace and strength of Christ is still the same. O that we were enabled to make daily use of it!

I humbly hope I shall never be left to neglect shewing forth the Lord's death, when it is attainable in a way consistent with the whole of my witnessing profession. If our conscience condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

I am, Rev. and Dear Sir, yours,

JOHN McFARLAND.

(G. p. 65.)

Reasons of Protest by John Foster [an elder in the congregation of New Perth,] against the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod.

The Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod being published and having come to hand, after diligent perusal of the same, I find myself constrained to protest against it, and I hereby do protest against it for the following reasons, amongst many others that might be given. Viz: for its ambiguity, for its self-inconsistency, and for its opposition to the Testimony of the Reformed church in her Confession, and Standards, and to the Scriptures of truth adduced for the support thereof.

As to the first, Is it not dark and ambiguous where they declare in page 2d, their adherence to the fundamental principles of gospel worship and ecclesiastical government held forth in the Directory for public worship, and the form of Presbyterian church government? Pray, what may be called fundamental? and who is judge? On page 4th also: Nor is it to be construed as a resignation of our right to adjust the circumstances of public worship and ecclesiastical policy to the situation in which Divine Providence may place us. Would it not be proper that we should know what they account circumstantials, and that it should not be left to every one to explain?

Article 2d. is so dark and artfully worded, that the most of people imagine that they still adhere to these covenants as binding upon them, although it is evident the very contrary is their design. How inconsistent is the second article with the first, where they profess an adherence to the system of truth laid down in the Holy Scriptures and exhibited in the Confession, yet in this article, part of three chapters of said Confession are cut off. It is strange to profess to be under the most sacred obligations to avoid unnecessary criticisms on this excellent treatise which would have a native tendency to weaken their attachment to the truths therein contained, and yet to cut off these three articles of said Confession.

Again, what large allowance is here given, even for brethren, members of the Synod, to object against this excellent treatise? and yet article fourth will not admit an objection about the civil establishment of the Presbyterian religion, nor the origin of civil dominion. In article second, what a flow of good words and fair speeches, about the Covenants and

judicial Testimony; and of their bearing pointed testimony against the errors and delusions that prevail in this country. Now, who can reconcile this with their conduct in renouncing the binding obligation of these covenants as covenants, and in laying aside both covenants and judicial testimony as terms of communion? Where, also, is this pointed testimony against that unbounded toleration of all and every kind of religion in America? It is truly affecting, that the same generation that came under formal obligations to adhere to these covenants, should be the very generation that should break them.

I think it strange also, to find, in article third, such professions of regard to the religious denominations in Britain, to which they formerly belonged; and yet, in the formula, page 27, we find they are not to receive a minister from either the Associate or Reformed churches there, however well attested, until they renounce their former engagements by declaring their hearty approbation of the Constitution of this Synod, and their resolution to adhere to it. Is it not strange, if, as this Synod would make us believe, there is no alteration intended only in circumstances, that they will keep these men at a distance only for a mere circumstance, however Associate or Reformed they may otherwise be?

I think that a strange and inconsistent like sentence in article fourth, viz: "they," the Synod, "esteem themselves bound to detach their religious profession from all foreign connections, and to honor the civil powers of America, conscientiously submitting to them in all their lawful operations." What, is there no such thing as conscientiously obeying said powers by any but those who adopt this Constitution? Or must people qualify by renouncing their covenant engagements and ordination vows? Surely the civil powers are more civil than that.

Article sixth makes soundness in the Confession mentioned above, the term of admission to fixed communion. When a member, then, of the Associate Reformed Synod, who resides in New Perth, administers baptism, and at the ordination of his elders, solemnly binds, as in the sight of God, to the Westminster Confession of Faith, without exception, and yet neither believes it himself nor intends that they should, as is evident from his approbation of the Constitution that cuts off part of it, it looks too much like daubing with untempered mortar.

As to my third reason, viz: its direct opposing and injuring the Testimony of the Reformed church, in her best times since her Reformation from Popery, by cutting off and laying aside

a part of these three chapters of the Confession of Faith—Mr. Mair, an Associate minister, in a sermon of his entitled the Babbler, asserts that this is babbling with a witness, and while disingenuity and perjury are crimes, they never can be held innocent. I would advise people to peruse carefully the Collection of Confessions, upon that point which is now cut off. I shall mention the particular places where that subject is treated of, where their testimony may be seen, with the word of divine truth adduced for its support. First, the Geneva Confession, page 21st; second, the Confession of the Faith and doctrine believed and professed by the Protestants of Scotland, page 48th, article 24th. Third, the first Book of Discipline, article 3d. Fourth, the second Book of Discipline, chapters 1st and 10th. Compare these with the Westminster Confession, chapter 2, section 4, chapter 23, section 3, and chapter 31, section 2, and try our new Constitution by them. Need I advise any to compare it with the Judicial Act and Testimony, and the answers to Nairn's reasons of dissent?

I am indeed surprised how any can come forth so barefacedly against the church of the Reformation, and destroy what they themselves had formerly wrought, by this heretical Constitution; for although they may set "Associate Reformed" at the front of it, it places its adherents in the same standing that the sectaries held in Cromwell's time against the Presbyterian party, and in the same place the *Indulged* held in the second king Charles' time: it also takes the side of Lithington against John Knox.

I think that scripture is but too applicable to the Associate Reformed Synod and its adherents: "And the Lord said unto me, a conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem; they are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah hath broken my covenant which I made with their fathers." (Jer. xi. 9, 10.) And Isaiah, viii. 11, 12, I think may be a warning to such as would not desire to slip in the defection. I think it is dangerous meddling with those that are so given to change. I make no doubt but that the adherents of this Constitution may charge me and others with pride and contention, as the reasons why we oppose the deed of a Reverend Associate Reformed Synod. The scripture says, "by pride cometh contention;" this I had cleared to my satisfaction, by a member of the Associate Reformed Synod, in a note of his sermon, where he

said, "that the pride must be on their side that make the defection." I think the charge can not be justly laid to those who adhere to the church in her standards, in her best reformed times, where they have plain scripture to support them, and stand against a new Constitution that does not give one text of scripture to support the change. This generation must be easily seduced who change thus. I heartily pray that the Lord may open the eyes of this Reverend Associate Reformed Synod, that they may see their sin and folly and turn from it; and save from seducers poor unstable souls, and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God; and that poor people may escape the danger of the snares they are surrounded with, and that truth and peace may yet flourish in our day.

This I humbly offer, and request that it may be marked in the records of the Session of the congregation of New Perth.

(H. p. 66.)

[The document intended for insertion in this place, has been mislaid.]

(I. p. 70.)

To the Rev. the Moderator of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, to be communicated:

With the greatest cheerfulness, I embrace the first opportunity of transmitting to you, the following minute of the Associate Reformed Synod.

"Agreed, that Mr. Logan write an affectionate letter to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, with a copy of our minute, appointing a committee to draw up notes, upon the Confession of Faith, &c. and inviting them to a friendly communication with said committee, in order that by the blessing of God a foundation may be laid for our happy union."

The minute referred to, is as follows; "Whereas, we have declared in our second article of the Constitution, that public and explicit covenanting with God is a moral duty, under the gospel dispensation, to which we are resolved to attend as he shall be pleased to direct: and that we will avail ourselves of every call, to bear a pointed testimony against the errors and delusions which prevail in this country; and whereas we are bound to satisfy the just demands of the people committed to our care, by carrying these resolutions into execution;

the Synod therefore resolve, that a committee be appointed to prepare short notes for illustrating the Confession of Faith, Catechisms larger and shorter, Directory for Worship, and Form of Presbyterial Church Government; and for pointing the truth exhibited in these tests of orthodoxy against the errors of the present time; and also for ascertaining the views the Synod have of the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England, and Ireland, more fully than has been done in the Constitution; and to prepare the form of a solemn covenant, suited to the circumstances in which God has placed us. Ordered, that Messrs. Telfair, Mason, Smith, and Jamieson, be a committee for the above purpose, and that the different Presbyteries or individuals be requested to make such communications to the said committee as may tend to further the execution of the business to them committed."

The committee meets at New-York sometime in October next, but to my remembrance the precise time was not determined. I may further inform you and the brethren, that if the plan above mentioned is well executed, the Constitution will of course be suspended, and so no longer a bone of contention between the Synod and you; therefore I would beg you would take the matter under your most serious consideration, that if possible we can see eye to eye in the things of God, and strengthen one another's hands in the work of the Lord; all of us may see what direful effects division among church rulers produces, and these are the more dreadful, as they carry along with them their influence to succeeding generations. In the present case I would suggest that it is not the plan to enquire, *who is in the wrong, who is in the right?* perhaps neither of us can sufficiently vindicate every mode of procedure; if we can agree in the truth in the execution of the above mentioned plan, it would be a desirable event unto many, and might greatly promote the Secession interest in this large continent, and on this account generations yet unborn might praise the Lord. It will easily seem to you, that the Presbytery may either appoint a committee to meet with the committee of Synod, or make what communications they think proper.

I would therefore beseech you, in the bowels of the Lord Jesus, that you interest yourselves in this matter in a proper time; if this plan be well executed, so that you and we can be united, we might still maintain all necessary connection with the Synod in Scotland. In the mean time what injury would the Presbytery sustain, by appointing a committee to

meet the other? If the matter is not done according to your mind, your hands are not tied from taking such measures as to you may appear most consistent with truth and duty.

Wishing you the direction of the Holy Spirit in this and all other things that concern the welfare of Zion,

I am, R. D. B.,

Your respectful humble servant.

WILLIAM LOGAN.

Pequa, June, 1785.

To the Rev. Mr. John Mason, *Minister of the Gospel at New-York, to be communicated to the Associate Reformed Synod, at their next meeting; or to any committee belonging to that Synod, which may be employed in the business to which this refers.*

Rev. Dear Brother:

We have received and considered the letter which Mr. Logan, by order of your Synod, wrote to this Presbytery. We could not answer it sooner, as our first ordinary meeting after the date of it, was on the third of this month. We are not informed by Mr. Logan of the precise time when your committee meets, and therefore could not address our answer to it.

The brethren of the Associate Reformed Synod may assure themselves that we are resolved, the Lord assisting us, to continue in the confession which we have made, and do make, of the name of Jesus. Our solemn engagements made with an uplifted hand to the Most High God, will be a witness against us, if we are unsteadfast and unfaithful in the cause of Christ.

By the first of the two Minutes transmitted to us, we are invited to a friendly communication with a Committee of your Synod; and by the last we are informed that this Committee is appointed "to prepare short notes for illustrating the Confession of Faith, Catechisms larger and shorter, the Directory for Worship, and the form of Presbyterial Church Government, and for pointing the truth exhibited in these tests of orthodoxy against the errors of the present time; and also for ascertaining the views the Synod have of the National Covenant, &c. more fully than has been done in the Constitution; and to prepare the form of a solemn covenant, suited to the circumstances in which God has placed them."

We are at some loss to know what our brethren mean by a friendly communication with them. Do they wish to know

our principles? These were never a secret. Do they wish to know our judgment about the confession which the church is at this time called to make of the truth, in opposition to those who slight or deny it in this land? It is to be found in the Narrative, Declaration, and Testimony, agreed upon by this Presbytery. Are there any other matters relative to the interests of religion about which they desire to know our mind? Let these be named, and we shall endeavor to communicate our sentiments with all plainness and readiness.

As to the proposed scheme of notes for illustrating the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, &c., and for pointing the truth exhibited in these against the errors of the present time, we do not well know what our brethren intend by it. If adherence to these notes shall be made a term of communion in their society, then they will be an addition to the Confession of Faith; and however proper an enlargement of that Confession might be, yet in the present state of things, we judge it best to let it stand as it is; proceeding no farther than to a vindication and defence of it, and of the rules and customs of the church of Christ, according as we find these agreeable to his word, in a separate work. If adherence to these notes shall be no term of communion among the ministers and people belonging to the Associate Reformed Synod, we do not perceive any considerable benefit the church will reap from them. A variety of authors have attempted to illustrate our Confession and Catechisms; and some of them have done so to as great advantage as we can reasonably expect the Committee of the Associate Reformed Synod will do.

As to pointing the truth contained in the Confession, Catechisms, Form of Church Government, and Directory for the Worship of God, against the errors of the present time, allow us to say, that we have little reason to expect this shall be plainly and faithfully done by the Associate Reformed Synod. The adherence of this Synod to these acts of the Westminster Assembly is extremely vague. On this we need not say, any more than we have already done in the tenth chapter of our Narrative. But as an amendment of this article of their Constitution makes no part of the scheme proposed by our brethren, it is not easy to imagine how such a vague adherence to the truth is consistent with a due application of it against error. Besides it is manifest, that though our brethren should make a loud cry against some very gross errors; yet others less dreadful, but very pernicious, are not much feared by them, or they would not appear so much inclined to enter into church fellowship with societies in which various articles of

the gospel are grievously perverted. Let our brethren remember, that there are little foxes which spoil the vines; lesser errors prepare the way for greater. If we admit those holding the former into our fellowship, they will draw those holding the latter after them. And let them remember also, that a mere slighting the truth is commonly followed with a denying of it.

We never had any connection with the Associate Reformed Synod; but some brethren now members of it were once connected with us, in maintaining a testimony against the errors of the present time. After having trodden it under foot in the manner they have done, we have little hope of their ever appearing under any such banner again, unless a very remarkable change in their views should take place. It is often hard to keep the right way; but harder to find it when we have once gone out of it.

If the testimony these brethren maintained while in connection with us, was not sufficiently pointed against the errors and delusions prevailing in this country, it was an ill way to mend the matter to cast it wholly aside. Their duty was to have stated it more fully and plainly in vindication of the truth, and in opposition to those who are at this present time, and in this place of the world, either contemning or denying it. This we have according to the measure of light and ability the Lord hath given us, attempted to accomplish.

The Declaration and Testimony we have published is severely reprobated by some leading members of the Associate Reformed Synod. It is therefore manifest, in joining ourselves to that society, we behooved to fall from the profession we have made; and this we can not do, till we are, from the word of God, convinced that it is wrong. Let these brethren give their judgment of our Declaration and Testimony as freely as we have done of their Constitution; and then it will appear whether or not there is such an agreement between us, as may be a foundation for our happy union. It will not suffice to allege, as some of these brethren do, that we are too contemptible to be noticed by them. Contemptible as we are in their eyes, they have noticed us so far as to order one of their number to write us. And if they design to recover us from what they judge the errors of our way, they must condescend yet a little farther: they must point out these errors to us.

As to the form of a solemn covenant which the committee of the Associate Reformed Synod is to prepare, we can say little about it, till we see it. Only we observe that no men-

tion is made of renewing our solemn covenant engagements. This we reckon necessary, as a testimony of the unity and steadfastness of the church, shewing that it is the same now that it was in the days of our fathers, and that we, as members of it, hold fast what through the mercy of the Lord, we have attained, and walk in the footsteps of the flock. Many imperfections may cleave to the church even in times of reformation. We do not insist on an approbation of every thing respecting the manner of covenanting used by our ancestors. No one can justly charge us with the fault often charged upon them, viz. the confounding civil and religious matters. Their peculiar circumstances plead for them; and if these do not excuse, they do, at least, lessen the fault of any mismanagement chargeable upon them. It is our duty carefully to avoid these things which might be blameable in their conduct; but it is our duty also, steadfastly to adhere to the Lord's cause in which they labored and suffered, some of them even unto death.

The address made to us by Mr. Logan, is, we doubt not, well intended. But as it conveys to us only the mind of that brother, not of the society to which he belongs, we shall not spend time in making many remarks upon it. One thing we can not help observing is, that he speaks another language than the minute transmitted to us does. It represents to us the Associate Reformed Synod as acting upon the Constitution, and building upon the foundation there laid. He tells us, that if the plan proposed in the minute be well executed, the Constitution will of course be superseded.

We can not lay much weight upon the suppositions made by Mr. Logan: if such and such measures be well executed, he thinks we might be all happily united. But it will be soon enough to propose an union, when a foundation shall be laid for it in the Associate Reformed Synod's confession of the truth and engagement of themselves to stand in its defence. What the notes they now propose to add, as an illustration of the Confession of Faith, may be, we can not tell. We have reason to fear, that these may tend rather to weaken the Confession, and to darken the truths contained it, than otherwise. Our fears are grounded upon this, that we apprehend the brethren of that Synod have been wavering and going backward for some time past. The Articles of the Union were framed to supersede that particular testimony which we and some of these brethren once maintained against the defections of this age: these Articles were superseded by the constitution: now we are told, at least by Mr. Logan,

that notes on the confession are to supersede it: and who knows but some other scheme will by and by supersede these notes also.

We do not know but this may be the last communication of the kind we may have with the Associate Reformed Synod. We entreat them, especially such of them as were once in connection with us, that as they regard the glory of God, as they would be found faithful in his house, and as they would promote the edification of his church, to beware of going down the stream of defection which flows so rapidly in our time. Opposing the testimony maintained by us, they may go farther and farther off the ground on which they once stood and may go into what they had no thought of when they set out in the course they now follow.

Let them rest assured, that, for our part, we are ready to join them, whenever we see any satisfying evidences of their returning to what we judge to be their duty. There is no connection between us, and our brethren in Scotland, which can hinder our union with those in this land who are friends to the Reformation principles we profess.

We entreat the brethren of the Associate Reformed Synod to consider what we have said in this letter, as proceeding from a regard to the truth, to the welfare of the church, and to the commandment of him who says, "That which ye have hold fast till I come."

The Rev. Mr. Mason will communicate this our letter, and we desire him to rest assured, that though we be not of the same mind with him in all things, we do still esteem him, and pray that the spirit of truth may be given to guide him and us into all truth.

Subscribed by order of Presbytery,

WILLIAM MARSHALL, Modr.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 4. 1785.

(J. p 74.)

A State of some Facts, relative to the Controversy now subsisting, concerning the Scots Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

The confusions which have happened in the Scots Presbyterian church, or Associate Congregation of Philadelphia, are no secret The place of worship belonging to it was seized upon, on the 10th of June last year, by some members of that congregation, who wished to transfer it to the Associate Re-

formed Synod. Fifty-eight was the number of persons of that congregation who were qualified to vote for trustees according to the charter of incorporation. Twenty-two, or not above twenty-four, of these took possession of the meeting house for themselves, excluding the rest. Mr. Marshall, who had been minister of that church nigh twenty years, was among the excluded. No determination being yet made by the Supreme Court, where the cause now lies, the party who have joined themselves to the Associate Reformed Synod, have held it since by no other right than what violent possession gave them; and this they have done with the approbation of the ministers of that Synod. These, pleased with the forward zeal of their new friends, readily consented to preach one after another in the pulpit from which Mr. Marshall was excluded, by no determination of any court, civil or ecclesiastical, but merely by the violence of a mob; and this they did, though they had a meeting house and a minister of their own denomination in Philadelphia, and though all their adherents in that city would make but one small congregation.

It is scarcely possible that these ministers can persuade themselves that they have acted in this matter according to the divine rule, *Doing to others as they would that others should do unto them.* They would judge it hard measure to be expelled from the churches they now occupy by a part, and by the lesser part, of their people; and that on account of their adherence to these principles which they solemnly professed at their ordination, and in the maintainance of which their people at the same time engaged to stand by them. They would reckon ministers acting towards them as they have done towards Mr. Marshall and his congregation, guilty of something very like an avowed transgression of the tenth comandment; and say, that they *coveted an evil covetousness.* It would surely have been as like the meekness and patience of Christians, and as consistent with the professions of love and tenderness towards those of other denominations made by the Associate Reformed Synod, to have waited till it was determined by the courts of justice to whom the property of that place of worship should belong, and if judgment was given in their favor, they might then have entered it with more credit.

To color their procedure with some appearance of equity, it is now asserted, that Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson were deposed from the ministry of the gospel, on the 14th of June, 1782. This is said to have been done by those who at that

time left the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, preferring the profession, the fellowship, and the designation of that party who have since been distinguished by the name of the Associate Reformed Synod. The paper to which they refer is quoted by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, in a Narrative published by them; and it certainly speaks as if they had deposed these men from the ministry. It was ordered to be read in the congregation of Oxford, at that time vacant; whether shame, remorse, or policy was the cause, it is certain what respected Mr. Marshall and Mr. Clarkson was passed by in the reading of it there. The Associate Presbytery have said, that this was a "deposing of these men from the ministry of the gospel, only not according to the form of the Christian process observed in most of the Reformed churches." Surely not according to that which the Associate Reformed Synod have agreed to observe, in the case of such as may object to any article or articles of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the most interesting not excepted. There is just reason to conclude that men of that description have been treated by them with more tenderness.

Ministers deposed by a Presbytery at whose bar they never appeared, whose constitution and principles they never acknowledged, by whom they were never called in any form to answer for themselves, from whom they never had the least intimation of the censure inflicted on them, and that only two days after the pretended ground of offence had been given, by these ministers refusing to go along with others in deserting the profession, which both they and the brethren against them, had till that time jointly made, is a riddle which shall be left to those whose business it is to expound it.

The difficulty of this riddle is increased by what the Associate Reformed Synod say in the fifth article of their Constitution, viz: "That the abuse of ecclesiastical censures may be effectually prevented, the following general rule of discipline is unanimously adopted, viz: That notorious violations of the law of God in practice, and such errors in principle as unhinge the Christian profession, shall be the only scandals for which the sentence of deposition and excommunication shall be passed." Is it so, then, that while this Constitution was printed for consideration, they deposed two ministers against whom no such errors or violations of the law of God were alleged by them? Or is it among them, as in some apostatizing churches, that these who endeavor to bear witness to the truth are counted the greatest offenders?

In May 1785, the Associate Reformed Synod ordered an

affectionate letter, (as they call it,) to be written to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. If their conduct before and since that time be considered, it will be manifest that their affection to that Presbytery was very weak. So far as their power could reach, it has felt the effects of their anger. That letter being received was considered at a meeting of the Associate Presbytery, at which were present William Marshall, moderator, James Clarkson and Thomas Beveridge, ministers; Robert Aitken from Philadelphia, and Alexander Moor from Muddy Creek, ruling elders. An answer was unanimously agreed upon, and both are now published, that whoever will may hear the one side and the other, and judge on which there is most consistency and truth.

It is not hereby intended to cast any blame on the writer of that letter, as if he designed to deceive his old connections. So far as is known he has taken no part in these violent measures by which Mr. Marshall and his congregation were compelled to seek another place of public worship.

As to what Mr. Logan says about the sad effects of division, we readily acknowledge, that the divided state of the church at this time is lamentable; but this evil will never be removed by one going after another into a backsliding course. When those who were once united in the truth, go out of the straight path, they turn aside every man to his own way; the more apostacy causing still the more division, till all unite again in a wretched indifference about the matters of God. If the Presbyterian churches in Britain and America had with one consent listened to our Lord's admonition, "Hold fast that which thou hast," a most desirable peace and unity would have remained among them to this day.

We know no better way to seek the peace of the church, than to endeavor steadfastness in the truth, which being received as it is in Jesus, is a bond of union among the members of his mystical body. We are heartily willing to bear with those who differ from us, so far as we can do it, without denying or slighting any part of that solemn profession we have made before God, angels and men It can be no pleasure to us to be accounted fools, and reproached as a people whose principles are diverse from all others, as a sect which it is not for the profit of the state to suffer. But we desire, through grace to commit our cause to him who judgeth righteously; who will arise and have mercy upon Sion, and who, for the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, will arise, and set him in safety from him who puffeth at him.

Philadelphia, May 28, 1787.

(K. p. 78.)

*Mr. Foster's letter to the Rev. Mr. Henderson in Scotland.**

Rev Sir,—It is said of Zion few careth for her; this is but too applicable in our day; her ways mourn, and few of the sons she hath brought forth take her by the hand. All seek their own things. The poor sighers and mourners would faint if they did not believe to see the Lord's own goodness in the land of the living. It is their mercy that her King is in her; the government is on his shoulder and of its increase there shall be no end. He is the Saviour thereof in time of trouble. And though ministers and professors should altogether hold their peace, yet deliverance will come from another place. Sir, there is a sort of necessity upon me to write to you, hoping you will communicate it to the Synod or your Presbytery or any committee of Synod, that may be appointed to think on our distressed case, if any such can be obtained. I am from the North of Ireland, and have lived in North America about 21 years, the most of which time I have been within the bounds of the Associate Congregation of White Creek or New Perth, now called Salem, in the County of Albany, now called Washington County. Mr. Clark was minister most of the time here though not in an orderly settled way. At the time of the coalescence, (which was kept a secret from us) he was removed on account of some difficulty between him and the congregation. The members of the Presbytery at that time were the two Mr. Annans and Mr. Mason. This Mr. Robert Annan has a great fluency of words and a magisterial air. He said publicly: "What have we to do with the covenants? they had their authority from the British Parliaments. What have we to do with the British Parliament?" And in order to remove our suspicions of his integrity, he held up his right arm saying; "I will suffer the loss of that arm before I will give up with one truth contained in that Bible," holding it up: (thus for a small swatch of the man.) Mr. Annan told us that the Presbytery had a worthy minister in view, who would suit our condition, whom we soon found to be the Rev. Mr. Proudfit, he was sent up and pleased the majority, who soon got his consent to labor amongst them. In a short time afterwards he came with his family and is as their minister, though not to this day installed amongst them. I think he answers the design of the leading party in the defection, as well as any

* This letter is without date, but was written in 1786 or 1787.

they could send; he is a man of a smooth, peaceable cast, and I hope is a pious man, but, I am sure his piety is not improved to the interests of religion as it ought to be. It may with great propriety be said to such pious persons amongst them, as Mr. Archibald Alison says in the cloud of Witnesses, to the godly in his time: "I have a word to say to you that are godly. Alas you have wronged the cause, for which I fear you have lost the countenance of God and will not get it again in haste, ye have waxed fat and kicked—Ye have laid a confederacy with enemies, for a false peace, ye have been crying peace and union with the indulged, because they are godly men, I say before the Lord that ye and these godly men have most basely betrayed the Kirk of Scotland, &c."

Mr. Proudfit has been much more of a snare to our people than many such as Mr. Annan could have been, and has drawn some off their standing who had stood through many trials before. After he came, I wrote to Mr. Marshall to see if they were all going one way, and were dropping a Testimony altogether; he was pleased to send me a long and refreshing letter: although there were many mournful things in it, yet it was refreshing to find that he and his brother Mr. Clarkson, by the good hand of God upon them had been helped to make a stand. Mr. Marshall informed me, that a probationer had, last fall come from Scotland to their assistance, and an ordained minister had come that spring, and that if there were any number of people among us that would make regular application, they would endeavor to send us preaching. This made me lament the deplorable case of many congregations who had formerly been under the care of the Associate Presbytery, and who of course must be as ignorant of the state of matters as we were, being shut up to the false glosses and colorings of these backsliding brethren who had fallen from their profession. Some scattering families amongst us, a number in the Scots Patent, [Argyle] and a considerable number in Cambridge made application, and the Rev. Mr. Beveridge was sent who was a glad sight to us. I had three children dead without baptism, and I had three baptized by him. He has dispensed the sacrament of the supper twice in Cambridge, and I hope we shall have the same privilege this season, as it is purposed to be observed the first Sabbath of September, if the Lord will. Mr. Beveridge has labored above his strength, as he has none to assist him on sacramental occasions, and it is a great way between the places he has to supply. He is generally with us part of the summer and winter. I think if Presbytery had one that

they could spare to our share, that Cambridge and we might support one in a settled way, which would make it much more comfortable both for a minister and for us, but this I find they can not do unless the Synod can send them some more help. It is of the Lord's mercies that matters are not worse with us, but I think it is amongst the evil signs of our times that there is so great a backwardness to come out to the help of the Lord against the mighty; there seems to be no want of help on the side of our opposers, they come from the General Assembly in shoals.

Mr. McDonald came, and left wife and children in Scotland, and looked out for a place in the city of Albany; Mr. Proudfit can divide the pulpit and day with him: but our friends seem very backward: if they would come and see, I dare say they will find there is work enough for them in the ministry, and if they can not live by it, I hope they may find means to get home again. I think, however, there is as good a prospect that way as when Messrs. Arnot and Galletly came over; and bad as our times are, I hope they will find as many friends too. All they will have to fear now more than in former times, will be from the new sort of enemies who are gone out from us.

Since, through the goodness of God, by means of the Synod, there has been some to support a testimony for truth, since the time that the first of their missionaries came to this country, I hope they will not be a wanting now. Such indeed, who wish to roll in ease, and seek great things for themselves, can not be expected to enter willingly into that part of the Lord's vineyard, where the walls are much broken down, where there is much rubbish, and the strength of the bearers of burdens much decayed, and enemies upon them from different quarters, all which will be found, I think in our case.

But to a man endued with a suitable measure of the spirit Nehemiah had, such service will be undertaken and labored in with some cheerfulness, although there should be many reports to discourage them from enemies, and Gashmus to back these reports.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN FOSTER,

Rev. Mr. Henderson.

(L. p. 79.)

The following extract of a letter written by Mr. Beveridge

to the Rev. A. Bruce, of Whitburn, Professor of Theology for the General Associate Synod in Scotland, during his first visit to the State of New-York, and which was inserted in the Christian Magazine, Edinburgh, 1799, p. 347, is a striking specimen of the quickness and accuracy of his discernment, the correctness of his observation, and the candor of his remarks:

Reverend and Dear Sir,

You will hear the state of our affairs from some papers which will be laid before the Synod; as also from the letters which have been sent to sundry persons at home.——I left Pennsylvania two months ago, and arrived, after a very long journey, at the upper parts of the State of New-York, where I now am, forty-eight miles north of Albany. I intend to return in the spring.——Learning is at a very low ebb here. The war has hurt this, as well as other things. Nothing is wanting, however, but good teachers and proper institutions. The people born here are beings just like those born in Europe. That the climate makes any alteration as to the natural abilities of men, is an idle dream of ignorant philosophers. The people here are as ingenious, as persevering in what they apply themselves to, as any other class of men. It is surprising to see how good mechanics some of them are, without having served under any master for instruction. They would be good scholars, too, if the means were in their power, and if they were directed to give proper attention to study; but one may see numbers commencing lawyers, physicians, ministers, upon one or two years study: this persuades others, that more is needless. There are also few or none in any line of life who are not either concerned in land or in trade; and you know how impossible it is for men engaged in these pursuits to make any figure in learning. The books most common here are generally of the more modern and flimsy kind: old books, in which the more solid materials are to be found, are very scarce. Farming seems to be necessary to the subsistence of ministers here: it has hurt many, and ruined some of them entirely. I do not think the people are niggardly or ungenerous; I imagine that the fault has rather been in the ministers: had they contented themselves with small farms, somewhat like our Scotch glebes, and attended more closely to their proper work, they would have been more respected, and perhaps more handsomely provided for; but people seeing their ministers good farmers, and employed chiefly in that business through the week, are apt to think that little is due to them.

Though New England is not what it once was as to religion and sobriety, yet it is still preferable in these respects to the other States. Rhode-Island is and ever has been a wicked place. The other New-England governments are no wise like it. Their laws against Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, swearing, and idleness, that forerunner of other vices, are excellent; but the war has prevented the execution of the laws, and occasioned a great overflowing of wickedness in some places. The laws of this State of New-York are not much calculated to restrain vice. Those persons who are at the helm of government are said to be wise as to mere worldly things, and manage affairs so that the people are not much burdened with taxes: but very few of them seem to mind any thing farther. I can not, however, but observe, that where the great Lord of heaven and earth has been acknowledged, temporal blessings have followed. The New-England States have but a confined territory, and a poor soil, compared with some others; yet they are still in a great measure *the strength of the land*. None of the other States are so full of inhabitants, so industrious, and so happy in their way of living.

The Scots are possessed of a great degree of national vanity; they think no body so good as themselves; and their own peculiar customs and modes of living, are, they think, preferable to any other in the world. Hence they are not always the most contented people here. They are full of the *greatness* of their families, the *goodness* of their country, the *excellency* of their laws, and the martial power of their nation. For my part, there are just two things which draw my heart to Scotland, though a poor country: It is remarkable as a seat of the church; *there* lies the dust of many of the Lord's saints, and *there* is a seed still serving him. For this cause I love the place; if I may use the expression, it will be much celebrated in the annals of heaven. Another thing which often carries my mind to the other side of the Atlantic, is my dear brethren in the ministry. I should love to live and to die among them. I have indeed been very happy in those who are here; but they are few. As to the people of Scotland, and all its goodness, customs, laws, and glory, I do make no great account of them as preferable to the people, &c. of other places. I find the natives here as agreeable, when they happen to have a tolerable education, as any other people. I will not, however, affirm, that I am quite free of nationality; for I have felt the disease working at times, and do not know but at some period I may fall under a greater degree of it.

Dear sir, how glad should I be if ever you were to come over to our assistance. I suppose your wife and family would not stand in the way. I never heard that they opposed your will. But you do not love this country; perhaps you would be better pleased with it than some of those who have fondly admired it at home. * * * * * * *

I am, &c.

T. B.

New Cambridge, Jan. 30, 1784.

(M. p. 106.)

Act of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania,

Agreed to at New-York, Sept. 29, 1796.

The Profession of our Faith is no light matter. "Whosoever (saith our Lord Jesus) shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my father who is in heaven." It is by our so doing that we declare ourselves to be his servants and witnesses in the midst of *an evil generation.* As many are enemies to him, and others are indifferent about the things which are his, it becomes us to show our esteem for him, and our regard to all things which he has *commanded*, in the most solemn and particular manner we can.

Four things are required of us as to this Profession of our Faith:

The 1st is, "That it be the very truth we profess." Nothing being admitted in that profession save what is agreeable to the word of God; either directly expressed in it, or by just consequence deduced from it.

2d. "It is necessary that we believe with our heart what we confess with the tongue:" Otherwise let our profession be ever so good, we in making it, lie unto God with false tongues. It is the want of truth in the heart that leads men to indifferency about the truth they profess, and by degrees to apostacy from it.

3d. "This profession we make ought to be so stated as that it may, as far as possible, distinguish us from such as are enemies to Christ, or affect to be neutral in matters of truth and duty." If this expose us to reproach, it is the reproach of Christ, and we need not think it strange if we be, as he was, reproached and hated for testifying against the world that its deeds are evil. The more plainly we thus tes-

tify against the world, the more vehemently will it be set against us. It will make little complaint of such as make little complaint of it.

4th. "We ought to be steadfast and consistent in this profession of our faith." It is to be, as it verily is, a matter of great weight; in which the glory of God, the edification of others, together with our own comfort and advantage, are deeply concerned. Light-mindedness and wavering in this can not be pleasing to God; nay, it must bring some tokens of his displeasure on us, whether we see them or not.*

It can not be denied by any who know the *signs* of this time, that there is a prevailing indifferency and coldness about the truths of Christ, and that this issues with many in damnable heresy or horrible infidelity. The church is in consequence of this so wasted, that it can no more be said to "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners;" (Song vi. 10;) but rather as described in Psalm lxxx, it is like "a ruined vineyard, enemies laugh at it, wild beasts devour it, and all who pass by make a prey of it."

We, who profess to join in testifying against the common

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* There are two things we are to adhere to, and persevere in, which yet the most people think needless: and these are, 1. The PRESENT TRUTH; and, 2. The LEAST TRUTH.

1. The PRESENT TRUTH is what we are always to adhere to and persevere in. (2 Pet. i. 12.) There the apostle speaks of being "established in the present truth." If a man do not adhere to the truth that is at present in controversy in his day, he will adhere to no truth at all. The best evidence of integrity, is freedom from the present corruptions of the times and place we live in, and adherence to the present opposed truth, so as to swim against the stream when it is strong. Some think—what need we trouble our heads with a truth that is controverted among great and learned men? Really, sirs, there is hardly one fundamental truth in religion but has been controverted by the devil and his instruments; and if we will not cleave to opposed and controverted truth, we must renounce the truth altogether. Nay, the more that Christ and his truth are opposed, the more we should stand firm for him and it

2. "The LEAST TRUTH is what we are to adhere to, and persevere in, if we would be stable in the faith. He that is content to part with a hoof, is content to part with the whole of religion: as the true obeyer has a respect to all God's commandments, so the true believer has a respect to all his truths. The least truth of God is a beam from the infinite Truth; and the man that will not adhere to the least truth of Christ, will adhere to no truth in the day of trial for the truth." (Ralph Erskine's Works, vol. 5. pp. 420, 421.)

"This stability in the faith excludes a doubtfulness and hesitation about the truth that we stand up and adhere to in a time of trial, (Rom. xv. 5,) 'Let every man be persuaded in his own mind.' A man will never firmly adhere to, or suffer for, that which he is not fully persuaded is a truth. I defy you to be a cleanly sufferer for the cause of Christ in a day of Scotland's defection, unless you can say, that you are really persuaded, that the covenanted reformation, doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the church of Scotland, is the work of God, and founded on the word of God, and you have no doubt in your heart to the contrary." (Ibid. p. 422.)

defections, are placed in a situation not agreeable to flesh and blood; we are reflected on by almost all denominations of christians, as very narrow-minded, uncharitable, and enemies to peace; and we being, in this part of the world, so very few in number, and our profession being so directly opposite to the latitudinarian scheme, which more or less pervades every other party owning the christian faith among us, and which is reckoned no small part of the glory of America, we may lay our account with being *wondered at* as a strange kind of people, if we will maintain no occasional communion, no not in attending public worship at times, with such as we testify against—but the way may be approven of God, which has few to plead for it in such a generation as this.

We therefore entreat those under our inspection, and professedly engaged with us in what we are persuaded is a necessary and seasonable testimony for the truth, not to act contrary to it, by taking part with such as are involving themselves in the common defection. If we attend on the ministry of such, it is contrary to the profession we ourselves have made; we take part with them as a church in the service of God, while in our profession we expressly declare that we ought to maintain a separate distinct communion as a testimony against them. It is not that we question the piety of a number among them; it is not that we deny that good sermons may be in some places preached among them; to their own Master they stand or fall. We are bound to think charitably of all who are owning the doctrine of salvation by grace through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus, and whose practice is in the general tenor of it, agreeable to the *commandments* of Christ. We own the Lord's flock to be sore scattered in *this dark and cloudy day;* but no favorable opinion we may justly entertain of particular men in a corrupt or backsliding church, supersedes the necessity of a testimony which ought to be maintained against it, or the necessity of a steadfast and uniform adherence to that testimony.

Further, the ministry of any church must be supposed to be agreeable to their declared principles, and agreeable to the course they are in; and therefore the best in corrupt churches at this time must vindicate their own conduct, and their continuance where they are, on that very scheme of latitudinarian opinions which is the design of that testimony we maintain to oppose. If what we profess is right, the instruction of such men is manifestly calculated to make us err from it. Can we ever suppose that the tendency of their ministry will not be to

draw us into the way they choose to walk themselves? Yes, surely it must be a snare to draw us from what we have solemnly owned to be the duty of the Lord's people. If the ministry of such men has drawn the most of their ordinary hearers astray, as to their filling them with prejudices at any proper testimony against the common backsliding and indifference of this generation; will not occasional hearing of them by degrees produce the same effects? Especially as the course they would lead us into is more smooth and agreeable to our natural inclination; and is very likely to bring us into better reputation with the most part of our neighbors, and to free us from various reproaches now cast on us.

We shall however suppose, that in some corrupt churches, there may be one here and there to be found, whose ministry would be less calculated to lead us astray. Do we conclude such an one to be in the right to continue where his particular opposition to some evils is of no effect, as to the reformation of the body he belongs to, and his continuance in it is a snare to such as follow his example? If we think him right, it is proper that we should be along with him; if we conclude, as agreeable to the profession made by us we must conclude, that he is in the wrong, then we ought to withdraw from him as a member of that corrupt body we testify against. We blame such a one no farther than he takes part with others in defection; but if we single him out and attend on his ministry, we approve in some part of his conduct, and by our example may draw the simple into a hearing of the worst part.

It may be told us, "That such as are averse to the testimony we maintain do however earnestly contend for the faith against infidels and Socinians."—In this we desire heartily to concur with them; yet we see the indifference they recommend about what they call circumstantials, prepares the way by degrees for these blasphemies. The bulwarks of a citadel may seem of no great matter, but while they are valiantly defended the enemy can never scale the walls or batter them down. If the proper order and discipline of the Lord's house had been duly attended to, there would not have been such an increase of these blasphemers and heretics. The ignorant, the profane, the careless who live without God in the world, are in most places of this country admitted to receive baptism to their children, and thus owned as Christians while they are no wise so, and while they take no care by instruction, example, and due attendance on the worship of God, to serve him in their families. Can they

be esteemed faithful in the work of the ministry who are not only at times deceived by evil persons, but duly administer the ordinance of baptism to the children of such as we speak of, without taking any due means to bring them to repentance and reformation of life? Are they free from strengthening the hands of evil doers, though they may no way intend this? Or can they be thought to attend to the word of the Lord spoken to Jeremiah, *If thou wilt take the precious from the vile then shalt thou be my mouth to them.* (Jer. xv. 19.) There can be no reconciling between that which in our profession we acknowledge to be duty, as to testifying against corruption of the ordinances of God, and attending on the ministry of such as so grievously corrupt them.

The want of sermon among numbers under our inspection whether at times or almost entirely, may be pleaded as an excuse by some. But to this we answer, That this wavering and wandering from the right course as to our profession is not the way to have this want remedied. Neither will they who are most inclined to make thus light of the cause we are engaged in be found generally the people who have the strongest love to the ordinances of Christ, or who can in all cases least bear the want of them. The truth is, vanity, curiosity, and something of the same kind, goes further in drawing people to hear where they according to their declared principles ought not to hear, than real love to the ordinances of Christ: and this is too evident from what experience may teach us, viz. that hearers of this kind do often become careless, not merely as to their profession but also as to their practice, so as to hear little any where.

We ought therefore to consider well what we do, in making the profession by which we are distinguished; and being once persuaded in our minds, from the authority of God speaking in his word, that it is just, and what we ought to maintain, we should endeavor to be steadfast in it, remembering the word of Christ, *that which ye have hold fast till I come.* (Rev. ii. 25.)

The ground of our secession from the judicatories of the national church of Scotland, was not a dispute about some particular points of doctrine or order, but simply this,—that these courts were so obstinate in a backsliding course, that in communion with them we could do nothing effectual for reclaiming them, nor use proper means to preserve the purity of the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the church of Christ, and to transmit these to posterity after us. The Presbyterian churches here may be justly considered as sprung

out of the national church of Scotland, and as still in communion with it: If they do not directly approve of its proceedings, neither do they in any wise testify against the injuries done to the cause and work of God by that body; and they add what appears to us no small corruption of God's worship, particularly in rejecting the book of Psalms as unfit to be used in the praises of God, preferring an imitation of those psalms by men far enough from inspiration or infallible guidance by the Spirit of God, and other human compositions under the designation of hymns. This principle upon which the use of the book of psalms is rejected, is in our view a very dangerous one, which goes to weaken and destroy the authority of the Old Testament. Nor is the doctrine of grace maintained by the greater part of Presbyterians in such purity as it ought to be. The free offer of salvation through Jesus Christ to all the hearers of the gospel; the true and proper condition of the covenant of grace as lying in this, that Christ should fulfill all righteousness; the nature of faith, as containing in it an appropriation or taking of Christ to ourselves, are not generally owned nor taught as they ought to be. And these are not with us mere names or questions about words, —they are articles of the gospel, which it is of great importance to preserve in purity. When these things are considered, we will not be found to have made any secession from the reformed church of Scotland, or from others connected with them here, any further than they have departed from the ground on which the church of Scotland stood in its purest times. Nor is our secession intended to continue any longer than the causes of it subsist. If we saw repentance for backslidings, which are many, a care to purify the house of God, and a returning to him, then we would take part with our brethren, though we might not be quite agreed with them in every thing.—May the Lord arise and have mercy on Zion and the time to favor her be come; when the watchmen shall see eye to eye in the matters of God's glory, and the Lord shall be one and his name one in all the earth. Amen.

Attested by

WILLIAM MARSHALL, Mod.
ROBERT OLIVER, Pby. Clk.

Agreeable to this Act of Presbytery we subjoin an extract from the Overture for a Confession and Testimony, laid before the General Associate Synod, April 28, 1796—*page* 160.

" We also testify against occasional communion in ordina-

ry cases in public ordinances, with churches that have apostatized from, or that are opposing the truths for which those who thus join with them profess to bear witness. This is to pull down with the one hand what they seem to build up with the other. It is inconsistent with "holding fast what we have already," (Rev ii. 25,) and with the many calls contained in scripture to steadfastness and unmoveableness, (1 Cor. xv. 28,) in opposition to wandering and wavering. (Eph. iv. 14.) It directly tends to induce those in corrupt communions to make light of any testimony for truth, and to harden them in courses of error and defection. It is indeed manifestly absurd; for if we may warrantably join with them at one time, why not always? why continue in a separate society."

The Question stated and Objections answered.

By a Member of the Presbytery.

A consistent and steadfast adherence to the Testimony received in the Associate body is directly opposite to the Latitudinarian spirit which universally prevails. There is no feature of our profession that has a more forbidding appearance in the eyes of this generation. An attack upon this favorite principle is like Paul speaking against the great Diana of the Ephesians. But it would be well for professors to take the advice of the town clerk of Ephesus, to "do nothing rashly," but examine the matter coolly by the rule of God's word, and the footsteps of the flock of Christ; and not by those maxims which have sprung from the degeneracy of this age.

In order to bring an odium upon us in being steadfast in our profession, the ingenuity of man has been put on the rack, to ask what would we do in many supposable cases? The edge of an erroneous principle may be grinded so thin, like a razor, as to be scarcely visible; but it is error still.

The question is not, What would be our duty in case we were abroad living in the bounds of one of the Protestant churches, who never attained to such a degree of reformation as the church of Scotland?

Nor is the question, What would be duty in many places of the world, where we could find professors of religion holding the same fundamental testimony with us against idolatry and heresy, though they are not exactly of the same views with us about every point of truth?

In one word, the question is not, What is the duty of others in the situation in which they are placed; nor what is the duty of every professor of the cause and testimony of Christ

to do in every extraordinary case? But the true state of the present question is, What is the duty of those who have declared their adherence to the Testimony for the Doctrine and Order of the Church of Christ, when they are deprived of ordinances dispensed under this banner? Shall they join occasionally with others, in their silent Sabbaths, or not? A sincere adherent to revealed truth as stated in our Testimony will readily answer in the negative. Surely it can not be a matter of doubt to them who have subscribed our Solemn Covenant Engagement, in which we declare as follows:

"And seeing many are at this time in a state of progressive apostacy from the cause and testimony of Jesus Christ, and many snares are laid to draw us after them; though sensible that we are in ourselves as liable to go astray as any, yet entreating the Lord to hold up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps slip not, and trusting that through his mercy we shall not be moved forever, we do solemnly engage, before him who liveth for ever and ever, that in every place where we in providence may be called to reside, and during all the days of our life, we shall continue steadfast in the faith, profession and obedience of the true reformed religion, in doctrine worship, Presbyterial church government and discipline, as the same is held forth to us in the word of God, and received in this church, and testified for by it, against the manifold errors and Latitudinarian schemes prevailing in the United States of North America."

As to others who make not the same profession, to their own Master they stand or fall; as far as they profess the truths of the gospel, and walk according to the rule of the word, we desire to rejoice. We have "a sure word of prophecy to which we would do well to take heed," by which we know that errors taught or evils prevailing in a church, and neglect of discipline being exercised against the erroneous and profane, is very offensive to the Head of the church, and ought to be so to all his followers. This is evident from the epistles to the churches of Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea, which are very descriptive of the present state of the churches in our day, including those of our own communion; for we have surely fallen from our first love, from that zeal and holiness which characterized our fathers.

Against the doctrine advanced in the preceding warning the following objections are frequently urged:

Objection 1. Our Lord Jesus Christ did attend on the public service of the Jewish church when in a more corrupt state

than can be alleged against those whom we have no communion with. (Mat. xxiii. 2, 3.)

Answer. The Christian church was not then founded. The church of the Old Testament was confined to the Jews, from the giving of the law to the founding of the Christian church, at the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the Pharisees and Sadducees were declared enemies to our Lord, and some of them did commit the unpardonable sin; and as our Lord always bore a pointed testimony against them, we can not understand the place of scripture referred to in the objection as in point. There was no place for the public worship of God but at Jerusalem, and therefore there could not be any separation from that church without giving up with the true God. We are not singular in understanding an attendance on the ministrations of the Scribes and Pharisees to be meant of civil subjection to the laws of Moses, and their sitting in Moses' seat means that they were as the executive of the laws of Moses. If this objection has any weight, it would lead persons to attend on the ministry of the grossly erroneous and profane, which is not plead for; and of those who deny the doctrine of grace, and place their salvation in the works of the law and in the observance of things not required of the Lord, which doctrines were taught in the Jewish church, yea, some denied the resurrection, and the existence of angels. An argument that proves too much proves nothing.

Objection 2. There were many corruptions in the apostolic churches, but we have no reproof to any for attending on ordinances in them.

Answer. The corruptions which prevailed are reproved by the apostle. Christ sharply reproves the churches of Asia for what was amiss in them; and if they did not reform it was certainly the duty of such as would be found faithful to separate, and then to withdraw from public administrations in them. The eyes of the Lord Jesus are as a flame of fire, and are certainly upon his church, and the corruptions which prevail in our day are as offensive to him as in the Corinthian and Asiatic churches; and when churches are obstinate in their backsliding course, we are commanded to "come out from among them and be separate." If it was otherwise, why are we commanded to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; to keep this commandment without blot." "Says the inspired apostle, 'If any man obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with him, that

he may be ashamed.' q. d. It will harden and embolden others to do the like if you countenance him."*

Objection 3. The offence that is taken at occasional hearing arises from mere bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and shall we be restrained by the humor of mere bigots?

Answer. Persons who take liberties of this or any other sort are very apt to talk in this style; but these persons ought to have weighed this matter before they joined to our fellowship; for since ever the Secession church has existed she has disapproved the practice in her members. Those who do not hold our principles, nor do conscientiously endeavor to walk accordingly, ought not to join in our fellowship, nor continue in it when they have changed their views.

The scripture has clearly enjoined, even in matters of indifference, much more in things morally wrong, that we should "give no offence, neither to Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." (Rom. xv. 1.) "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our ownselves." The apostle tells us, that even in an indifferent thing he would not offend even a weak brother. "But when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1 Cor. viii. 12, 13.) Our Lord has pronounced an awful wo against offences, "Wo to the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh." (Mat. viii. 7.)

O that professors who go over the bounds of their Christian liberty, by occasional hearing, attending stage-plays, amphitheatres, and the like, would duly consider what the Lord has said in his word about offences. It is a matter of certainty, that the most serious and godly in the Secession body have always been much offended at such practices, and that those who have followed them have always called their taking offence a piece of bigotry and needless scrupulosity.

Objection 4. We hold Christian communion with others sometimes in prayer, and why not in other ordinances also?

Answer. There is a very wide difference between Christian and Church communion. In Christian communion we give no countenance to any thing peculiar to their profession, but not so in public worship: "Are not they who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" (1 Cor. x. 18.)

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* Mr. Gellatly's Observations, page 20.

Objection 5. The Associate body have their faults as well as others, and keep in their communion some persons very weak and unworthy, while they refuse communion with many very pious and worthy Christians.

Answer. The church in the present state is imperfect, and reformation work has always been carried on by imperfect men. The enemies of reformation have always been ready to tell those who have been active in maintaining a testimony for present truth to look at home. We no doubt have our faults in common with others; but the generation pay us this compliment, that what is no fault in others is a great one in us, practically owning the goodness of the cause we profess. But as to keeping in our communion some who are weak in the faith, we have Christ's divine warrant—to "feed his lambs," (John xxi. 15,) and to "receive him that is weak in the faith," (Rom. xiv. 1.) We have also a divine warrant for excluding from our fellowship such as are pious when they do not walk in an orderly manner: "Now we command you brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thess. iii. 6.) In the 11th verse the apostle tells us that "idle persons and busy-bodies are disorderly walkers." Surely all who corrupt the ordinances of Christ and oppose any part of revealed truth, as well as those who walk after the flesh and the sinful customs of this world, are disorderly walkers. The word is taken from soldiers who break their ranks. The true soldiers of Christ ought to observe the word of command, and all the directions of Christ the captain of our salvation, and act as Gideon's army, "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp." (Judg. vii. 21.)

Objection 6. How can we know what the opinions and errors are in any religious society without we go and hear?

Answer. We are required to "try the spirits, whether they are of God,"—which must be by a rule. Now the best way is to find out what are their declared principles and distinguishing practice, and try these by the rule of God's word. By going to hear we may be led to think better or worse than they deserve, by the talents of him whom we hear; we may hear a point of truth handled very orthodoxly, and be deceived; or we may hear truth attacked in an artful manner, and be misled. Error is often so artfully wrapt up in phrases that it is not easily seen through. "That we be no more like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie

in wait to deceive." (Eph iv. 14.) The apostle here alludes to them who play tricks of legerdemain, by sleight of hand, and impose upon the simple. He also speaks of "many who corrupt the word," (2 Cor. ii. 17.) The word *corrupt* is taken from the practice of mixing liquors, which is frequently done so artfully that it is not easy to perceive the mixture.

But supposing the word was purely taught, when the worship of God is mixed with human inventions, and the ministry of it is in stated opposition to a pointed testimony for present truth, how can we in that case attend upon it without giving up with that we are called to hold fast—that which is good? Nebuchadnezzar's image had different soderings, it was composed of clay, iron, brass, silver, and gold; now if any of these were separately examined, you would form a false opinion of the image if it was deemed to consist altogether of this.

Objection 7. But may we not hear and take the good and let the bad alone?

Answer. We would not be willing to try the experiment in our natural food, to eat where there may be poison mixed with it. Our hearts are naturally disposed to err from the right ways of the Lord. Mankind in general are disposed to think lightly of erroneous doctrine, as if it was of small consequence. It is frequently repeated, this old and dangerous axiom, That the worst heresy is a bad life. But the Lord has required us to "cease from the instruction that causeth to err;" and to "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly." Such is the corruption of our hearts, that we are in greater danger of taking the bad and letting the good alone. Our hearts may be compared to a sieve, that holds the chaff and lets the good grain go through. This is exemplified in the case of a minister either advancing a new or erroneous doctrine, or having any thing odd in his action or pronunciation,—how many of the hearers will take notice and remember this, while few can recollect the plain truths of the gospel, when they are delivered in purity and simplicity? It is sadly verified in those who follow this course, that at last they will attend any where, and swallow down any doctrine which they hear.

Objection 8. There are many eminent preachers among other denominations, far superior to those of our communion, and not going to hear them looks as we were afraid of going into green pastures, for fear we would not like the lean pastures of the Associate body.

Answer. There may be pastures which appear very luxu-

riant and rich, and yet are very dangerous by poisonous weeds which grow there; and there may be also such bars in the way, that though the pastures are good there is no possibility of coming at them. And sometimes there is no fence; then the pastures may be filled with beasts of such a nature that association with them would be dangerous. It is true the ministers of the Associate body do not excel for their rhetorical flourishes or oratorical gesticulations. They do not aim at the vehemence of the theatre, but consider that the oratory of the pulpit lies in gravity; but one thing may be said of them, which can not of other denominations—they all speak the same things, and preach the same doctrine. Those who want food will be satisfied with wholesome fare, though it is not set off with many ornaments and kick-shaws. Paul was afraid of the Corinthians, "lest as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity of Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 3.)

Objection 9. Is not this condemning our Lord, who rebuked his disciples for being offended at one who cast out devils but did not follow him? (Mark ix. 38.)

Answer. The occasion of these words was our Lord teaching his disciples humility, by setting a child in the midst. John the apostle was so struck with this lesson, that he mentioned a case that had lately occurred in respect of himself and the rest, who did forbid a man to preach and cast out devils because he followed not them, and wanted to know if this was agreeable to the doctrine our Lord now taught. Christ told them it was not. Because this man was engaged in the same cause and prosecuting the same end, and had Christ's approbation by casting out devils.

He was probably one of John's disciples who did believe in Christ as come; though not one of the twelve or of the seventy, he held the same faith. Unless it be argued that this man held some different articles of faith, or order of worship, this quotation does not give any support to the cause it is intended. In this way the word of God is perverted by many to their destruction.

Objection 10. May we not occasionally hear where we have ground to believe the Lord is graciously present, and his people holding communion with him?

Answer. There is a spiritual and invisible communion which all the members of Christ's mystical body have together in him, though not a visible and organical communion. The Lord's presence, communicating his grace along with his truths dispensed with many corruptions, can not be the rule

of our duty,—and of this we are very imperfect judges. If this has any weight, it condemns all who hold any separate communion from any, where we may charitably believe the Lord has any of his people. It would lead us into communion with Baptists, Independents, Episcopalians, and perhaps into the church of Rome. I should think it a very uncharitable sentiment, that there are none of the Lord's people among these, or that the Lord does not graciously bless his own word and ordinances, when they are dispensed with manifold corruptions. If we know any thing about communion with Christ, we may cease to wonder at his holding communion where many corruptions are, seeing he condescends to hold communion with us, and dwell in our hearts, so full of enmity, atheism, and unbelief.

Communion with Christ is one of the distinguishing privileges of the church invisible, and is neither the standard nor rule of external fellowship in the church of Christ. If this is the case, all confessions of faith should be laid aside; and then a new controversy will ensue,—some will be extending their fellowship to Independents; some will go further, to Anabaptists; some to the Episcopalians; some to Unitarians; some to Papists. It is a certain fact, that those who plead for occasional communion are by no means agreed about the extent of it.

Objection 11. According to this principle it sets all denominations on a level, whether Papists or protestants, Dr. Priestly or Dr. Nisbit.

Answer. We must have recourse to the original grounds of our setting up a separate communion. Surely these admit of various degrees of weight, according to the degrees of corruption and defection. We have always declared, that our separation is not from persons, but on account of the public state of matters in the churches. Our great objection against some orthodox ministers, such as Dr. Nisbet, is that they remain in communion with others who are erroneous, and active in carrying on a progressive defection from the reformation attained to. But surely we never imagined, that countenancing the ministry of such was equally offensive as hearing where there is idolatry or gross heresy taught. In the promotion of a testimony our zeal ought to bear some proportion to the injury done to revealed truth. It might with equal propriety be alleged, that because the church refuses communion with drunkards, liars, Sabbath-breakers and adulterers, therefore we put all upon a level. But it is a very nice matter to ascertain the degrees of offence in the church of Christ; they may be com-

pared to the different shades of light in the colors of the rainbow that run into one another. "Some sins in themselves and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others." Sins derive their aggravation from the person offending. Unfaithfulness to God and his truth is no less offensive in a saint than in a sinner. Aaron's sin in making the golden calf was no less offensive that he was "the saint of God."*

A.

On page 105, when speaking of the Act passed 1791, concerning public covenanting, it should have been noticed, that while that act was under consideration as an overture, the Presbytery, June 2d, 1786, agreed upon the following "Brief Vindication of the Duty and Seasonableness of Public Covenanting."

"They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." (Jeremiah l. 5.)

1. The Church of Christ has, in all ages, and in all places of the earth, been the object of Satan's malice. Many cruel, and many subtle devices have, through his instigation, been devised against it. It is but a little flock; and its enemies are a whole world lying in wickedness. It is in perils, through infidels denying the Christian faith; in perils, through heretics perverting the gospel of Christ; in perils, through false brethren betraying the cause to which they profess themselves friends; in perils, through the lukewarmness or the cowardice of its own members, who often refuse to stand up, as they ought, in its own defence; and in perils, through that fire which is of men's own spirits, breaking forth in envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings, frequently about questions which are of no moment, and which have no foundation in the scriptures. But the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it. A troop may seem to overcome it; but it shall overcome at last. It is like the bush in which the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses; burning, yet not consumed.

2. Christ's little flock is, at this time, grievously scattered. It wanders through the mountains, as having no shepherd; and is become a prey to all the beasts of the field. But he has not lost sight of it. "Behold, I, saith he, I will both search my sheep and find them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep, that are scattered: so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." He, who, in the day of his holy indignation at the treachery and

* See Mr. Anderson's Sermon on Prov. xiv. 27.

wickedness of those who professed to be his people, hath scattered Israel, will, in loving kindness and in mercy, gather him and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. Come, then, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain, upon the earth.

3. The Lord is saying, Go through, go through the gates, prepare ye the way of the people. Cast up, cast up, the high way, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people. In much weakness, and in the midst of many temptations, this Presbytery have endeavored to do as he hath commanded. We have, according to the measure of understanding and judgment given to us, pointed out the way, in which we, as a church, ought to renew our solemn covenant engagements to the Lord; and we entreat all who desire to be found faithful witnesses for Him, to the present and to succeeding generations, that they would lay this matter to heart.

4. We are not devising any new path. The way, in which we desire to go, is that in which the Lord led his people who have gone before us. If, through weakness, we walk slowly, and are often like to halt; it is our consolation, that the Lord Jesus has a tender regard to the weak, and has promised, that they who wait on him shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

5. To deter people from giving attention to any thing said by us, they are told, that we are very few in number, only two or three ministers belonging to this Presbytery. As to this, it may be replied, that seeing the greater part of the generation are either like the Samaritans, who opposed the building of the walls of Jerusalem, or like the nobles of Tekoa, who put not their necks to the work of their Lord; it is no just cause of reproach to us; that we are few in number. It is better to stand fast in the profession of our faith, though we should, for this, be gazed at, and counted fools, than to follow a multitude in a gradual apostacy from it. The promise of Christ has the same gracious aspect towards a few, as towards a greater number: Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

6. The duty we recommend, as particularly seasonable at this time, has been much opposed: and there is not less hatred towards it in the present age, than in these which are past. We may lay our account that enemies will stand in our way, as we set forward to it. But can we expect, that any thing in which the glory of God, and the prosperity of his church is concerned, will pass unopposed in this evil world? Certainly not; or the enmity of the serpent must cease; his agents must lay down the weapons wherewith they fight against God; and the corruption of the saints must be so entirely destroyed, that no one of them shall speak, as Peter once did, favoring rather the things which are of men, than the things which are of God.

7. Through the mercy of the Lord, a very small remnant may yet be found asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward. Such we would intreat to consider, *whence* the objections to public covenanting have formerly and of late proceeded. The first opposers of it were men who had set their faces toward Rome: The next, such as had

turned aside from the faith and order of the most purely reformed churches, and knew not where to fix; but passed from sect to sect, and added error to error. And, at all times, but especially of late, this duty hath been spoken against by men of Gallio's disposition, who have lightly esteemed the truths and ordinances of Christ, have boasted of their neutrality in the great controversy between God and Baal; and have preferred their worldly interest, and the praise of men, to the cross and reproach of Christ. Such have the leaders been, in the opposition of which we now speak. That some others of a better character have been found in their company, we will not deny; but, as they have been drawn by the enemies of Christ to a joining with them in opposing one part of their duty, there is reason to fear lest they be more and more ensnared. One wrong step makes way for another; those, who once depart from the straight path, know not how far they may wander from it. Where the beginning of apostacy seems small, the end is often fearful. Of this, ancient and modern times afford many remarkable instances.

8. The tendency of the objections made against a public vowing to the Lord ought to be considered. The enemy is drawing the simple into a dreadful gulf; but lest the sight of it should affright them, he is studious to keep them from looking forward to it. By the same arguments that public vows and covenants are opposed, confessions of faith are removed out of the way: all distinction between the friends and enemies of Christ is destroyed; and a foundation, not of God, is laid for uniting in one church all who bear the Christian name. Those who preach another gospel, a counterfeit of that which we have received, and those whose principles are a very compound of ancient and modern heresies, not excepted.

9. Ever since the design of drawing the Reformed churches back into the kingdom of the Romish Antichrist was so blasted, as to leave the enemy little or no hope from that quarter, strong and subtile efforts have been made to remove them from the foundation on which they stand to another side. Once reverence for antiquity was used as a pretence to recommend superstition, and to enforce submission to prelates acting as lords over God's heritage. To the confusion of Rome and its allies, it has been made manifest that we follow the true antiquity, building on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, of which Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner. Now, regard to the scripture, and the advantage of judging freely for ourselves, is used as a pretence to turn us aside from the footsteps of them who have, in faith and patience, followed Christ through tribulation, and are at rest with him in glory. It is our own fault, and must be very hurtful to us, if we are ignorant of Satan's devices, how he would carry us to the right and to the left hand of the Lord's way, solicitous only to keep us out of it. The Judge of all will determine, whether those who keep the old path in which our reforming ancestors walked, or those who have chosen new ways for themselves, pay most regard to the scripture; and Christians may, upon a fair examination, easily discern, in whose writings and sermons there is most of the style and spirit of the scripture.

10. It has been often said, and it will perhaps at this time be repeated, "That there were great confusions and tumults among our ancestors in times of covenanting; that many of them acted deceitfully; and that they are no friends either to the church or the state, who attempt to revive what has been, as many think so happily buried." We an-

swer, That confusions and tumults will ever arise from the malice of Satan, and the corruption of men, fighting against the kingdom of Christ. He has forewarned us of these. I am come, says he, to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division. The preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles occasioned great confusions and tumults in places where all was in peace before. Were the apostles of Christ, therefore, the authors of these disturbances? Verily, no. But Satan stirred up earth and hell against them, as he has done ever since, against those who have succeeded them in the work of the gospel, especially against those who were most faithful, active and resolute in the cause of God. When the walls of Jerusalem are building, will the enemies of Judah be quiet? We may challenge our adversaries to show us what good and useful work ever the Lord's servants were engaged in, and were not at the same time constrained to act like Nehemiah's builders, holding a weapon for defence in the one hand, and working with the other. Christ is not less precious to them who believe, that one of his disciples betrayed him; that another denied him; and that a tumultuous assembly cried, Away with him, crucify him. Nor is the rash zeal which oftener than once appeared in some of his disciples, any discredit to the cause they were engaged in. Some marks of imperfection will adhere to the actings of the most wise and upright men on earth; and as Christ was opposed, in the same manner will his servants be; they must suffer with him. And, as the weakness and mistakes of those who followed him, and the treachery of some who once professed to follow him, did not excuse an opposition to him, while he was on earth; so, neither will any thing of that kind excuse an opposition to his cause at this time. Many of the Israelites kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; but who will affirm, that this was a sufficient reason for others to contemn the oath they were under to the Lord God of their fathers, and to deny that public covenanting was a duty?

11. We have heard, say some, more of the making than of the keeping of such covenants as these you plead for. So it may be. The history of the Jewish church may satisfy one in speaking thus of the covenants entered into by it. What then? We have heard more about the preaching of the gospel, than about profiting by it. Shall we, therefore, thrust it out of doors? Nay, but as many have revolted from their professed subjection to the Lord, and made light of the offers of his mercy, let us take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

12. As for what is alleged, that, in acknowledging and renewing our covenant engagements to the Lord, we manifest ourselves to be no friends to the peace of civil society. It is an old calumny cast upon the prophets and apostles: the former were represented as the troublers of Israel; the latter, as men who turned the world upside down. Our Lord Jesus himself did not escape it; his enemies cried out, saying to Pilate, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar. In almost every age and nation, Christians have suffered under it; we may, therefore, patiently bear it. Only, we may observe, that they are not always the most peaceable and orderly themselves, who make this complaint. It was a seditious rabble who, in Thessalonica, and in other places, were the first to accuse the apostles of sedition. The kingdom of Christ is

not of this world; and no carnal weapons belong to it. The powers of the earth can suffer no injury from it, except in so far as they may dash themselves in pieces in attempting to destroy it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people. All that burden themselves with it, shall be cut to pieces; though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. When the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed: they are warned, that he who sitteth in the heaven shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then shall he speak to them in wrath, and vex them in his hot displeasure. If they set themselves to oppose the claim our Lord Jesus has to the heathen, who were given him for an inheritance, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, which are, by the same eternal charter, his possession; he will break them with a rod of iron; he will dash them in pieces, like a potter's vessel.

13. It is urged against us, that many wise and pious men are very opposite to us in their views, particularly about public covenanting. Be it so; our faith does not stand in the supposed wisdom or piety of men. The more rational and moderate sort of Papists readily allow, that the Pope of Rome may err; but allege, that a general council of such as they esteem wise and pious men, is infallible. How nearly is the doctrine, now current among many Protestants, allied to this? The general consent of such as they esteem good men, must give a sanction to truth and duty; and so far as this extends, according to them, we may contend for the one, and practice the other; but no farther. This principle leads away from the word of God; and makes it our guide, only so far as men of some character in the church, agree concerning the mind of the Holy Spirit in it. It is a principle which must proceed either from a sinful fear, lest we offend men, or from an ambitious desire to gain their esteem. It could never have prevailed so much as it has done, if professors of Christianity had not, in a great measure, lost a sense of their duty to the Lord Jesus, the King and Head of the church, and of the inestimable value of all these things contained in that testament confirmed by his death; every article of which (the least not excepted) is worth more than we can possibly lose in contending for it. An heathen could observe, that his friends were dear to him; the truth still dearer; and his observation, which has been often repeated, as a just maxim worthy to be adopted by every man, carries in it a reproof to those who do not pay so much regard to what concerns the Doctrine and Order of the Church of Christ, as he did to some philosophical speculations.

14. But, after all that the adversaries of public covenanting have to say about good men who are on their side, they can not reasonably ask us, To which of the saints will ye turn? A great cloud of witnesses will be found, bearing testimony to that despised cause for which we now plead, and resisting unto blood, rather than they would consent to the least step of defection from it. Let their holiness of life, their acquaintance with the mystery of godliness, and their faithfulness in the service of Christ, be examined as narrowly as may be, from the most credible accounts of the times in which they lived. To Christians not carried away by prejudice, it will appear, that, in the present generation, there is a great falling off; so that we may cry, Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men; and the testimony of such as, through ignorance, or through the

influence of their connections, or through regard to their own reputation and worldly advantage, have gone into the common defection of the times, is not of equal weight with that of our worthy ancestors, who esteemed the reproach of Christ preferable to the favor of the greatest on earth; and, in manifold tribulations, endured as seeing him who is invisible; not counting their own life dear unto themselves, if, by their death, they might bear witness to the truth, and give glory to God.

15. The current of defection from the principles of the Reformation flows so rapidly in this age, and, particularly in this place of the world, that it may seem folly in us to strive against it. We may be told, as we have sometimes been already, that, whatever credit the principles maintained by us may gain in other countries, they will be adopted by few here; that they are too narrow for the people of this country; and that public covenanting, in the manner we propose, must be considered as a hindrance, or rather as an absolute preclusion from a free inquiry after truth. But to this we may reply, that the Lord's thoughts are not as men's thoughts, nor his ways as men's ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than their ways, and his thoughts than their thoughts. Small and despised, as the remnant may be, who appear willing to devote themselves to the Lord by solemn oath and covenant, and to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering; yet, through the blessing of the Lord, they shall take root downward, and bear fruit upward, and be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord of hosts. As to ourselves, indeed, we have nothing to say. Our hand is in the trespass. To us belongeth shame and confusion of face, for with us are manifold offences against the Lord. But whatever he may do in rejecting any or all of us from his service in the church; yet a seed shall serve him, and one generation after another shall bear witness to his truth; and, in all places where he shall cause his name to be recorded, he will come unto his people, and will bless them. The earth is the Lord's; and here, as well as in any other quarter of it, he can open a great and an effectual door to the preaching of the word, by which all that which belongs to his word shall find entrance. What though there are many adversaries? This is nothing else than we may expect. Satan will oppose the right and claim our Lord Jesus Christ has to these ends of the earth. The conflict may be severe, and it may continue long; but our Redeemer shall reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The opposition to the Lord's cause, and particularly to the duty of vowing to him, can not well be stronger here than it has been in the land of our fathers. Yet the Lord stood by his people there, and strengthened them; so that their enemies did not prevail to swallow them up; and oftener than once, when his cause was as it were buried, a grave-stone laid on it, and a watch appointed to see that it should never rise; the Lord has raised it again, making the keepers of its grave tremble, and become as dead men. Our fathers trusted in the Lord, and he delivered them. O ye of little faith, consider this, and rely on him also; so shall ye be helped; your heart shall greatly rejoice, and with your song ye shall praise him. The heathens of Syria said, The Lord was God of the hills, but not God of the valleys; but we know that he is the Creator, Governor, and Judge of the whole earth; and that his word, his Spirit, and the riches of his grace in Jesus Christ, are every where the same to his church.

16. As to a free inquiry after truth, we are so far from opposing it,

that we acknowledge the general neglect of it to be one of the most lamentable things in this land. Multitudes are destroyed for lack of knowledge, and Christians are not diligent, as they ought, to learn, though they much need to have the way of God more perfectly expounded to them. They must be either very ignorant, or very malicious, who represent our covenant engagements as standing in the way to hinder us from searching the scriptures, and as binding us to adhere to that which we may find to be contrary to them. To be ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, is the character of those who are led by the spirit of error. The truth, which we are assured is of God, we confess before the world, and solemnly engage that, through the grace of God, we shall continue in the faith, profession and obedience of it, never denying it, nor making light of it. But, without controversy, if we should afterward find any thing defective or amiss in that confession we make of the truth, we are not only at liberty, we are even solemnly bound to rectify such mistakes by the word of God, which we acknowledge to be the only rule of faith and practice.

17. This being a time of general and increasing defection from the Lord, it is particularly necessary and seasonable for us to renew our covenant engagements to him. Our unshaken attachment to his cause, when very low, and lying under a multitude of reproaches, is what he requires. If we do unfeignedly love the truth, we will stand by it, though fallen in the streets, and trampled on by all who pass by. To follow Christ, while the day is fair, the way easy, and the company such as the world may count respectable, is not enough. Let the sky darken, the storm rage, our companions desert us, and hosts of foes rise to oppose us, it is our duty to hold on our way, and we need not fear to do so, seeing he has said, I am with you.

18. It may be said by some, what advantage can arise from the appearance of such a small and weak handful of people in behalf of these principles, which are so generally condemned, or slighted in this generation. We answer, that it is our duty to stand as under a protest, bearing witness to the truths of the gospel, and to the institutions of the Lord's house, against those who either deny these or make light of them; and thus the progress of the evils we testify against, will be in some measure stopt, or, being thus plainly reproved, they will not be so ensnaring as they would otherwise be, to such as desire to be saved from being partakers in the sins of this generation, or from any wise giving countenance to its backslidings. Do insulting adversaries ask, What do these feeble adherents to principles generally rejected? Will they be able to defend themselves against the wisdom and learning of this age? Will they revive what has been buried in forgetfulness? We may answer, that while we trust in the Lord, and keep his way, we need not be afraid, though ten thousands set themselves against us round about. Through God, we shall do valiantly; for he shall tread down our enemies. Whatever advantage our weakness, and our participation in the iniquity of the times may give them over one or all of us; yet against that cause in which we are engaged, they shall not prevail.

19. It is frequently insinuated, that a regard to public covenanting, and to other things connected with it, tends to take people off from the study of practical religion. This we dare affirm to be a grievous falsehood, devised and spread by him who was a liar, a deceiver, and a murderer from the beginning. That some persons, making a show of zeal

for the public interests of the kingdom of Christ, are strangers to the power of godliness, is a sad truth, not to be denied, but lamented; and daily warning is to be given those who attend on the ministry of the word to take heed, that they hold not the truth in unrighteousness. But true godliness is an improvement of what God has revealed in his word: the truth is the foundation of it, and the means by which the Holy Spirit effects it in the hearts of believers. The doctrine of faith lays a foundation for the grace of faith, and from this last springs the obedience of faith to all the commandments of the Lord. The abuse of medicine may increase disorders in the human body; the meat and drink, which are the means of supporting life, may, through the wickedness of men, be perverted to the destroying of it; yet we do not, on this account, despise the bounties of Providence: No more is any article of truth or duty to be despised, because some do not make a right improvement of it. The Lord knoweth, that our heart's desire and prayer to him is, that the power of godliness may be revived in the churches. But we have not yet learned, that to obtain the end, we should slight the means, or endeavor to take them away. And we may further observe, that the authors of the insinuation mentioned, are not usually the most exemplary in their own practice; and are more distinguished by their contempt or hatred of the truth, than by their love of holiness. As defection from the principles of the Reformation has prevailed, so has the power of godliness declined. And such as have despised and broken the engagements, we in this church are under, to continue stedfast in the profession of our faith, we have never been remarkable for keeping the engagements we are also under to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.

20. As the divine warrant for public covenanting has been already stated by this Presbytery, in the Declaration and Testimony, agreed upon by them, 1784, it is not necessary to repeat what is there said. The arguments from the scripture, proving the lawfulness of vowing to the Lord in that manner we propose, are more fully considered, and the particular objections of adversaries answered in the writings of Messrs. Moncrief, Gib, Morrison, Graham, and others on that subject; and to them we refer such as desire further instruction and direction in this matter.

21. There is a call given at this time, Who is on the Lord's side? Let him openly and resolutely come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. If carnal reasonings prevail with those who have some knowledge of their duty, to slight it, they may never find their way so clear again. The Lord may reject those men who stood back when his cause was very low, and under more than ordinary reproach, or who were very careless, not regarding much how matters went in the church of Christ.

22. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. We may call on him, as the church did of old, Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage; he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities; thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad ac-

cording to the days in which thou hast afflicted us, and the years in which we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it. Amen.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 23, line 5 from foot, for "James" read "Francis."
29, line 6 from top, for "communication" read "communion."
30, line 2 from foot, for "there" read "these."
40, line 12 from top, for "David" read "Daniel."
54, last line, for "letter" read "Letters."
67, line 15 from top, before "health" insert "of."
110, line 4 from foot, for "farm" read "frame."
304, line 18 from top, dele 2.
425, In part of the edition, "Rev. Thomas Pringle" occurs instead of "Rev. Francis Pringle."